



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

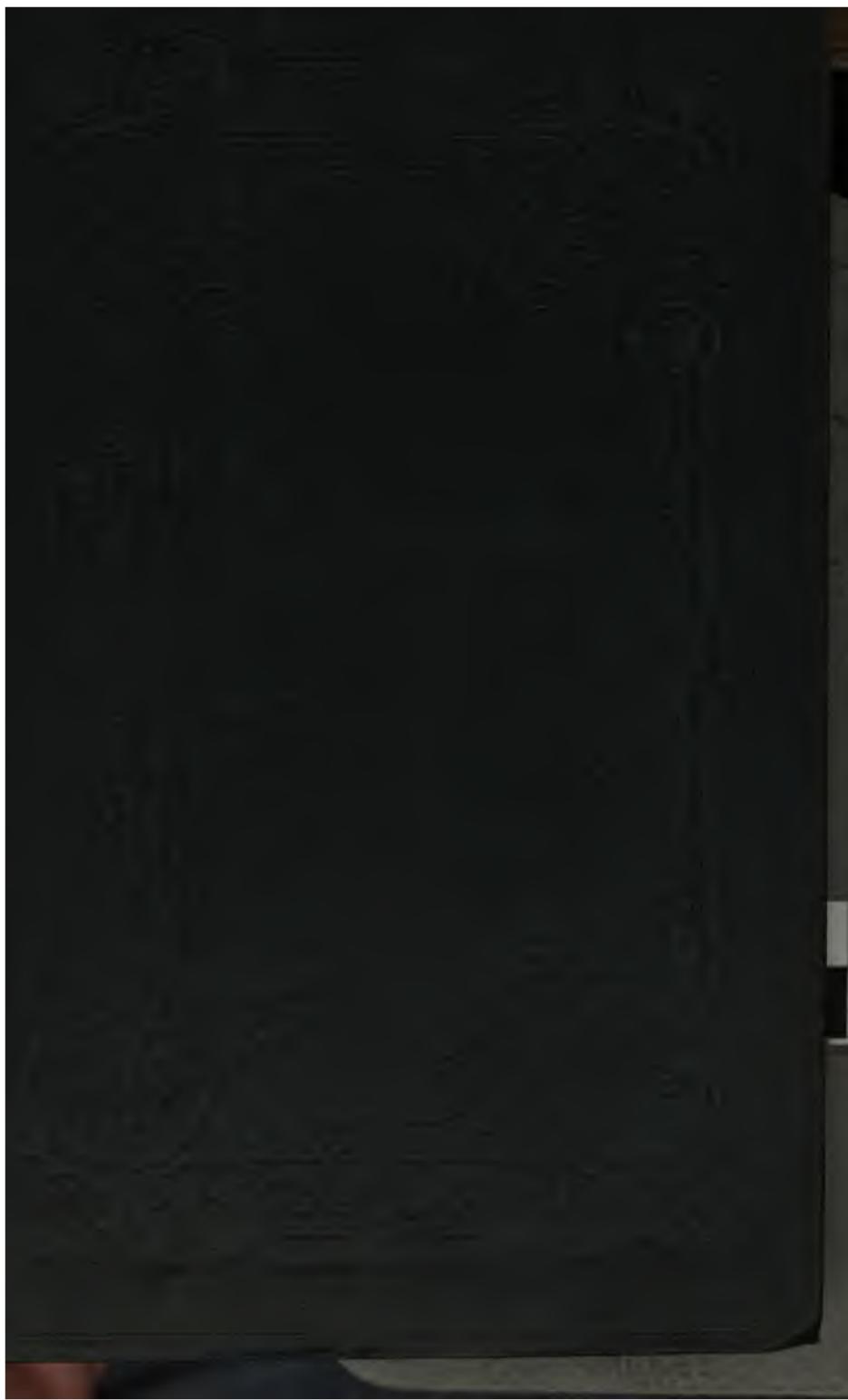
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600069312R



M U S G R A V E

AND OTHER TALES.



MUSGRAVE;

A STORY OF GILSLAND SPA.

And other Tales.

BY

MRS. GORDON,

AUTHOR OF "KINGSCONNELL," "THE PANOONARS," ETC., ETC.

"The common growth of mother Earth
Suffices me — her tears, her mirth,
Her humblest mirth and tears.

"The dragon's wing, the magic ring,
I shall not covet for my dower,
If I along that lowly way
With sympathetic heart may stray,
And with a soul of power."

WORDSWORTH.

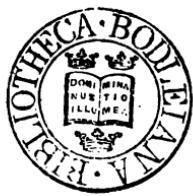
IN TWO VOL.S.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HOPE & CO., PUBLISHERS,
16, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1851.

249. v. 464.

LONDON:
HOPE AND CO., PRINTERS,
16, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.



MUSGRAVE;

A STORY OF GILSLAND SPA.

CHAPTER I.

“Près de toi l'heure de mystère
Ne m'appellera plus demain ;
Vers ta demeure solitaire
Mes pas me guideront en vain.
J'ai respiré ta douce haleine,
Et des pleurs out mouillés mes yeux,
J'ai tout senti, plaisir et peine ;
J'ai reçu tou baiser d'adieu.”

Chanson Francais.

IT was on a beautiful afternoon in the month of August, almost sixty years ago, that a young man, on foot, approached the summit of a steep and wooded height, overhanging the course of a little rapid mountain river, which for some miles forms the boundary

between the counties of Northumberland and Cumberland. This stream, the Irthing, forces its impetuous way, on the spot where our narrative opens, over a rocky channel, and through a deep and romantic glen, whose craggy sides are clothed with a labyrinth of trees and shrubs, and whose picturesque and finely-wooded scenery presents a strange contrast to the dreary expanse beyond. The Waste, as it is called, of Bewcastle, famed in Border song and story, extends immediately above the lovely glen of Gilsland, such as we have described it, and interposes a wild and solitary range of moss and moor between England and Scotland.

Pausing for an instant from his rapid walk, the pedestrian above-mentioned directed a glance around; then, selecting what appeared like some indication of a track amongst the brushwood, plunged vigorously into the tangled maze, and down the rough

and craggy sides of the glen. A hasty, though difficult, descent, at last brought him to a spot where he came to a halt, and flung himself, panting and breathless, on the ground. It was one of the loveliest and most secluded nooks on the Northumbrian side of the river, a species of natural bower, formed by the meeting branches of two graceful birch trees and a mountain ash, overhanging a low flat rock covered by rich mosses, and divided from the water's edge only by a narrow pathway, scarce discernible at a few paces distance. Here, he remained some minutes, his eyes fixed upon the headlong course of the clear brown stream, as it brawled along amongst the rocks, sparkling in the beams of the sun; and his ears filled with the low continuous murmur, the perpetual *susurrus* of insect life, which on a warm summer's day amongst the woods, keeps up so soothing an undertone to the ceaseless current of thought or fancy in the

listener. But in the present case, the listener's mind was not in a state sufficiently calm to enjoy that dreamy sound. It seemed to jar upon his over-excited nerves, and cause him speedily to start from his half-recumbent posture, propped against the white stems of the birches. Pulling out and anxiously consulting his watch, he advanced close to the side of the river, and gazed with an eager look on the opposite bank, towards a spot where a winding foot-path might be descried, descending from the wooded heights above. Not a living creature was there to be seen, nor a sound heard, save that of the stream. Again he looked at his watch, with a gesture of trouble and impatience.

“ Ten minutes after the time!” he exclaimed aloud. “ If any thing should have gone amiss! If I should have to go without seeing her!”

He returned to the seat, and cast himself

despairingly down. There was no one by to smile at the extravagance of his feelings; probably few would have had the heart to do so—for he was very young, a boy of eighteen, and he had come there to bid a long, it might be a last—farewell to the object of a pure and ardent first attachment.

In this mood of utter hopelessness, he remained for what appeared to him at least an hour, and was in reality about ten minutes; then again he sprang to his feet, and advanced towards the river's brink, this time not in vain. He now perceived a white object stealing rapidly, yet cautiously, down the winding path; and darting from his place of concealment, speedily gained a ford a little way above, where a range of huge stepping stones enabled passengers to cross at all times except when the river was in flood. He reached it just in time to clasp the hand of a young girl, as she lightly

sprang upon the first stone—and with an exclamation of “Mary, my dear Mary! I thought you would never come!”—to guide her safely across.

Behold them now,—seated side by side in the birchen bower—a beautiful dark-haired and dark-eyed girl of seventeen, a boy a year older, but tall, erect, and manly beyond his years; of a frame whose slight but firmly knit symmetry gave promise of “a proper man”—should he be spared to reach manhood;—and of that cast of countenance, the bright blue eyes, the chesnut curls shading an honest open forehead, the brilliant teeth disclosed by the most frank and joyous of smiles, which seemed at once to attract confidence and affection. It did not appear a countenance made to express sorrow, but at this time, after the first glow of happiness in the meeting had passed away, a dark cloud of sadness settled upon it.

“Mary,” he said, “if you had not come, I

think I should never have had the heart to stir from this place again ; but I daresay I have been very impatient, and that, as you say, it is not so long after the hour of our tryst. You will forgive my impatience ; it will be long enough ere we keep another in the Gilsland woods."

The eyes of the young girl overflowed at these words. " Dear, dear, Walter," she at length said, making a strong effort to suppress her sobs, " I am sure you know well that if I could I should have been before the time, rather than after it. But I was forced to watch my opportunity, to steal out of the house unobserved ; and there are so many people about, that it was not easy. My aunt and the girls are gone with a large party to Lanercost ; and I got off under plea of a bad headache—indeed, it was no falsehood. My aunt knows nothing, you see, of what has passed between us. Bessy and Jane guessed, I am sure, why I remained behind to-day, but they will not tell her."

“ Your sister Bessy has never been my friend, Mary,” said Walter. “ I am sure she is very glad that I am going to India. She thinks you will soon forget me, when I am fairly out of the way.”

“ She laughs at us, and calls it childish folly,” replied Mary, “ but she is too good-natured to do an unkind thing; besides that, she would not venture, knowing that we have mamma’s sanction. But Walter, you do not think I shall forget you, however long it may be—” her lip quivered, and she paused abruptly.

“ *I* think so, Mary?” exclaimed Walter; “ you don’t suspect me, I am sure,—you, whom I have loved since we were children together—and who have loved me, haven’t you dear, as long?—I could not doubt you, Mary. I never dreamt of doubting you. I can leave you with perfect confidence. And when I come back, a wealthy Nabob—and stranger things have come to pass!—or when

I am rich enough to send to remind you of your promise, if I cannot get away to fetch you, then they will all learn to think differently,—Bessy and all your sisters. Then there will be no need to have secrets with any of your relatives. I should have been glad to have spoken to my Father, Mary, before I left,”—he added after a moment’s silence—“but your mother”—

“Oh! indeed, Walter,” anxiously interrupted Mary, “mamma thinks it would be much wiser to write afterwards, when there is any prospect. We are both so very young, she says—every thing so distant, so uncertain; and you know my papa, though he did not actually forbid an engagement, thinks as Bessy does, that it is folly. Mamma’s utmost influence has never drawn more than a most reluctant consent from him. And your father, Walter, is so different, so—”

“Yes,” said Walter, sighing deeply, “I could not but feel the truth of all your

mother urged on the subject. Little, indeed, do they care at home for any thing that I may do. I am going to-morrow, and my place will soon be filled. I know that. No doubt it will be wiser to wait a while—to say nothing until I have some definite hopes before me—rather than run the risk of a harsh prohibition, which I might—should—be tempted to disregard. And accordingly I have given a promise to that effect, to your mother. I saw, and bade her farewell this morning.

“And how,” asked Mary, “did you get here, Walter? You have never walked all this long way from Wansted? Last time you came, last Saturday, you had been all night at the Dene.”

“Yes, it was my farewell visit to Philip Selby. But I did not walk all the way here; I brought the old dun Galloway, and left him at Haltwhistle, whence I came across the country on foot, by all the bye-paths and

cross-cuts which I know so well. By the time I get back, he will have had a good long rest, and I shall be at home before dark. There will be no one looking out for me, though it is my last day at home."

"Oh, how can I believe it!" said Mary, "no more meetings! Never more for years!"

"But think of our happiness when we *do* meet, my own Mary! It will repay us for the separation of years."

"It may be so, Walter," interrupted she at last, when the ardent, hopeful, youth had again and again reverted to those encouraging anticipations; "it may be all true, yet I cannot see it. I cannot look beyond the present moment. You are going,—I shall not see you again. When I awake to-morrow, it will be to remember that we shall meet no more. And so it will be for many and many a to-morrow, longer than I dare dwell upon. You are going into a new

world, where you will have much to occupy your mind, and little leisure to think; but I shall be left amongst our old haunts alone. And yet I shall not be alone, not at liberty to steal down here and think of you; surrounded by all those gay people at the Shaws; forced to talk and to dance and to drive about, when my heart is breaking."

"Mary," he earnestly replied, "it is true that I am going into a new world: but I shall carry the old one along with me wherever I go. And if I can leave you, as I do, with perfect confidence, amongst hosts of admirers, surely you may trust me! Keep up your heart, dearest, and let us hope for better days coming."

More, much more passed between the young lovers, interrupted at times by passionate bursts of grief, which, despite hopeful words, and assumed courage, would not wholly be suppressed; the last unrestrained outpourings of the strong affection

and despairing sorrow of very early youth. Clasped in each other's arms, they reiterated, again, and yet again, their vows of unfailling constancy; and then, ere they parted, exchanged some small tokens of remembrance; all they had to give each other. These were their Prayer-books, a long lock of Mary's dark silky hair, bestowed in return for one of Walter's chesnut curls, and the two halves of the gold coin, which, in old north-country fashion, they had broken between them when first their love was avowed, and which each had continued to wear since then. It seemed as if the dreaded word, farewell, lingering on their lips, could never find utterance; as if they never could summon courage to tear themselves asunder. But the last rays of the declining sun, pouring through an opening in the woods, recalled them to the recollection, that, in order to avoid having her absence enquired into, it would be necessary for Mary to

hasten back to the Shaws Hotel at Gilsland Spa, which was her present abode, so as to gain her own apartment, ere the picnic party from Lanercost should return at the early tea-hour of the place. There was no time to dwell on the final agony of parting. Once more, and for the last time, did Walter guide Mary's faltering steps across the ford; there was one more long, long embrace, then all was over. He stood as if rooted to the earth, and gazed after her retreating form, as with her face buried in her handkerchief, her whole frame shaken by her sobs, she slowly took her upward way along the footpath, whose overhanging trees presently hid her from his view. He watched the last flutter of her white dress beneath the branches, and when it vanished, and she was gone, he turned away, sprang with the speed of a wild roe across the stepping-stones, and up the opposite side of the glen, till he reached a mossy bank about half-way

to the summit, shaded on all sides by the trees. Here he flung himself, face downwards, on the ground; and with no human eye to witness him, gave free vent at last to the tide of suffocating anguish, which his manhood, and his tenderness for the feelings of his companion had so long controlled.

It was very late that evening when the old dun Galloway brought his rider, beneath the radiance of a glorious harvest moon, to Wansted Hall, the ancient and dilapidated dwelling of his family. The Musgraves of Wansted had once been a wealthy, as well as an ancient Northumbrian race; but one of thoughtless and improvident habits, which, for the last few generations, had caused a rapid sinking in their original state and consequence. The old Squire, father to our hero, having inherited the spendthrift propensities, along with the embarrassments of his progenitors, had long ere middle age nearly achieved the consum-

mation of the work begun by them ; and now found himself an all but ruined man, with two sons, the elder of whom, in spite of the warning held out by his own career, was suffered to remain idle at home ; while the younger, through the kindness of an influential relative, had obtained a cadetship in the East India Company's service, and was then on the very eve of his departure for what, at the period of which we write, was still considered as a species of Eldorado, a land of wealth and of romance.

Walter Musgrave was many years his brother's junior, and from his very infancy had been regarded as a species of interloper in the family ; one whose arrival was alike unexpected and unwelcome, as bringing an additional burden upon an encumbered property ; and still farther diminishing the small inheritance left for its heir. Even from his mother he had never received the ordinary tenderness and solicitude of maternal love.

He grew up, a harshly treated and neglected boy; but, providentially for himself, was saved from the else inevitable calamity of being an uneducated one, by the circumstance of the parish clergyman, a good man, and an excellent scholar, being glad to add to a narrow income by taking pupils at a very moderate rate. The truly admirable training of heart, as well as of intellect, for which he was indebted to the modest village parsonage, served to counteract the evil influences of a loveless home, a home of pride and poverty, of extravagance and meanness combined, perhaps the most blighting of all moral atmospheres. And the youth's was in itself a noble nature, one of those fine dispositions that struggle upwards to the light through all obstacles, and seem to gain strength from circumstances which would utterly crush and destroy the germs of good in characters of more feeble texture. Like oil brought

into contact with water, it was impossible to amalgamate worldliness and him; they had no affinity with each other, and he remained the guileless and single-hearted being that nature had made him, in a scene where all beside was false and hollow.

The attachment between him and Mary Charlton, who was the sister of one of his fellow pupils, had begun, as he himself reminded her, in absolute childhood, in consequence of his being a frequent holiday guest in her father's house; a gay, opulent, and somewhat jovial abode, which offered a strange contrast to his own dull and little-frequented home. Mr. Charlton was a manufacturer, who had retired from business with a large fortune, and having purchased property in the neighbourhood of Wansted Hall, inhabited a handsome modernized mansion house close by the village of that name. His numerous family, well appointed, well educated, yet with little

real cultivation or refinement, his good establishment, and comfortable style of hospitality, presented altogether a very fair specimen of that wealthy middle class peculiar to England ; the aristocracy, so to speak, of *village* as distinguished from *county* society ; a distinction, however, still strongly felt and marked ; and which was, if possible, even more rigorously insisted on in those days. The intimacy of Walter with the Charlton family was, therefore, from the outset, a fruitful subject of taunts and jeers, and jests that often masked an envenomed sting, with Squire Musgrave and his lady ; and not less so with their elder and favourite son. They were all noted for an inordinate degree of that family pride, which becomes so senseless when carried to an extreme, by those who do not combine with it the exalted sentiments and high sense of duty, that render it in some measure honourable and respectable ; and

they looked down with feelings which, had they been strictly analysed, would have been found to contain nearly an equal mixture of contempt and envy, upon the wealthy upstarts, who had come, as it were, to beard the lords of the soil upon their own territory. This dislike, with its numerous petty but galling manifestations, was returned with ample interest by the somewhat democratic man of yesterday; and Mr. Charlton, in the midst of all the rather patronizing kindness which he made a point of shewing to the chosen companion of his son, and a youth whom it was impossible to know without liking, had been moved by the love of thwarting and mortifying the haughty parents, who, he was aware, disliked his visiting at Wansted Grange, more than by any desire for an intimacy with one of their family. Enough has been said to explain the motives which actuated his wife, a woman of more tenderness and amia-

bility than strength of character, in exacting from Walter the promise which, as we have seen, lay with uneasy weight upon a sensitive conscience, and high sense of filial duty. Her husband, who, though reluctantly, was prevailed upon so far as not positively to forbid the engagement between the lovers, confidently reckoned upon its dying a natural death, all the sooner that it was not too vehemently opposed at the outset; but with a view to preventing any parting interview, had insisted upon Mary's accompanying her aunt and sisters to Gilsland Spa. It was at this period the universal fashion for the gentry in the northern counties of England, and southern of Scotland, to spend a fortnight every summer or autumn, at that picturesque and secluded watering-place, perched upon the very summit of a hill on the Cumbrian side of the Irthing. Close by the rocky channel of the river, in the deep glen beneath the hotel,

rises the healing spring which has given notoriety to the spot; and which, in former days, was wont to be annually blest by the Prior of Lanercost, who came in solemn procession, with the brotherhood, every Midsummer day, to discharge that duty. Here, the place being at least fifteen miles distant from Wansted Hall, and the house at that season overflowing with guests, and full of racket and bustle, Mr. Charlton confidently reckoned on Walter's finding it impossible to obtain a private interview with his daughter. But this was indeed, as the result proved, attempting to "fetter flame with flaxen band."

The last meeting was over now; the last words spoken, and the youth, so soon to be an exiled wanderer, stood before his father's door; alone, save for the presence of his trusty friend the old dun Galloway, and that of an aged and shaggy house-dog, who pressed close to him, licking his hands, and

fondly rubbing his head against him. It was late, and no one had considered it necessary to sit up awaiting him. He remained a little space gazing around him in the lovely moonlight, upon the tranquil repose of the scene; the old grey Hall deep in the shadow of its venerable trees; and the long lines of silver chequering the mossy turf of the lawn. Beautiful and calm it looked in the eyes now dwelling upon it for the last time, perhaps in very deed the last; and it was with a choking sensation in his throat, that he reflected on the small blank which his absence would cause to be felt in the house of his father.

“They will none of them miss me,” he said. “No one at Wansted Hall will sleep less soundly for the thought that I am tossing on the salt seas, and may never stand beneath the old roof-tree again. This poor old fellow,” and he patted the Galloway’s sides as he loosened the saddle-girths, and

prepared to lead him to the stable, “ he may look and whinny in vain for my step coming in to feed him of a morning ; and you, poor Towzer ! you, I know, will listen for my approach, and miss me, and loiter about my old haunts in hopes of my return ; but it is more than father, or mother, or brother, will do for Walter. Well, but when I come back, as, please God, I hope to do, with plenty of money to help my poor father under his difficulties, and make the old hall a little more comfortable, they will be glad enough to see me then. All the old sore feelings will be forgotten ; and Mary will be a loving daughter and sister to them. Many happy years, I trust, are in store for us. I must not let my heart sink.” And the generous, hopeful boy, blest in his ignorance of the future, and his inexperience of that unknown world on which he was about to enter, but doubly blest in his own buoyant, energetic, and unselfish nature, stifled the

rising sob of wounded and slighted affection, and proceeded to make his poor old favourite comfortable for the last time in his stall, ere retiring to the bed by which no fond step was lingering to bid him good night, though that night was to be his last at home.

CHAPTER II.

"Oh, my cousin, shallow-hearted ! Oh, my Amy, mine
no more !
Oh, the dreary, dreary, moorland, Oh, the barren, bar-
ren shore !
Falser than all fancy fathoms ! falser than all songs have
sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish
tongue."

Alfred Tennyson.

SIX eventful years had passed, between the period at which our last chapter closed, and that when we once more find Walter, now Lieutenant Musgrave, seated alone in his tent, a few days previous to the storming of Seringapatam. The lapse of those years had matured the slender boy into a tall, handsome, vigorous man; and warfare and

the influence of climate, had otherwise altered his appearance, though not disadvantageously. The fairness of his youthful complexion had given place to a fine manly brown; but his clustering hair had not yet become thinned, or dulled in hue; his bright honest eye had not lost its joyous lustre, and his smile, if less frequent, was as frank and winning as ever. His occupation during the noontide hours of intense heat, was writing to her, who, far distant though she was, never left his thoughts; the idea of whom was the lode-star of his heart, the incentive to all his exertions; and with whom he confidently anticipated spending many happy years of after life. His letter ran thus.

“It is long, very long, several months, since I have had a single line from you, my own dear Mary. This letter will be the fifth that I shall have written since I received one; and whether it and its predecessors

may ever reach you I cannot tell ; for there must be great irregularity somewhere, to cause the detention of yours. Of course, you have written as usual. Do not suppose that I have any doubt of that. I am no self-tormentor, above all where I am so perfectly secure as in the present case, so that I can bear the delay with more equanimity than might be expected. And yet it does try my patience at times. These things make one feel what a banishment India is. And still more does one feel it even when a letter arrives ; when, after the first rapture of receiving and reading it is over, one looks at the old, old date—five—six months back at times, and thinks how much may have occurred since it was written ; and also that before the answer to it can reach the writer, he must in all likelihood have forgotten all he had said in it. I do feel at times, under the influence of such thoughts as these, as desponding as it is possible for me to

do, who am not naturally inclined that way.

“Another thing troubles me at present. News has just reached us in camp here of the loss of the Company’s ship “Clarence,” which left Madras a few months ago; and by which, although I did not write to you my Mary, I had written to my father, informing him of our engagement, and begging his sanction and his blessing upon it. I conceived myself (as I have told you in a previous letter, but now repeat in case of other miscarriages) absolved from the promise to the contrary from which your dear mother never would consent to release me, by her lamented death. It was your last letter but two which brought that sad intelligence—an old story now; but my sorrow for her has not grown old; I shall be altered indeed when I forget her and all her maternal kindness. I never thought her wrong in anything but that one—the concealment from my father;

and to that, I am sure, it was her tender love for us that moved her; the dread lest we should be rendered unhappy; or tempted to disobedience. But she could not guess what a load it laid on my conscience, how often the sense of having been wanting in filial respect and submission, weighed upon me as with a presentiment of evil, a dark forboding for the future, which may heaven avert! Now, when I believed I had discharged my conscience, and indulged in sanguine hopes of receiving from my father all that was wanting to the happiness I feel in looking forward to our union, I have just learned that the unlucky vessel which conveyed my letter has foundered off the Cape Verde Islands, with an amount of damage and loss of life, the thought of which ought to make me feel ashamed of my own selfishness, in so bitterly lamenting that her letter bags should have been amongst the lost things on board. But it looks like

a bad omen ; that is why I have taken it so much to heart.

"I am ashamed of myself, my Mary, for writing in this strain to you. It is weak, unmanly. I ought rather to try to keep up your spirits ; and I fear, my love, that you greatly need some one to do so, more especially since your dear mother was taken away ; for I cannot disguise from myself that your father has most unwillingly suffered our engagement to subsist so long as it has done ; indeed, he intimated as much in that unexpectedly harsh, and, I must say, unjust letter, in which he refused his consent to your ratifying it, and coming out to join me here, under the escort of our Colonel's lady, before this war broke out. I have just been re-reading the letters I have had from you since then ; and I am struck, even more than I was at first, by the tone of depression which pervades them all, more especially the last of the number, so different from that in

which you wrote for a long time after our separation. Then there have been of late so many gaps in our correspondence. So many of your letters must, I am convinced, have been lost, from the distance between their dates, and the irregular way in which they have come, that I cannot but feel very anxious as to what is passing at home; and dread that you have been meeting with harshness and unkindness on my account, since you lost our best friend. And yet withal, Mary, I do not and cannot feel any remorse for having, in the words of your father's letter to me, 'entangled you in a rash and unadvised engagement;' for I think that the price of a true and faithful heart is above rubies, and I know that you might wander the world over and not find another who would love you with the devoted affection that I do. Surely the wealth of the whole world would not compensate for the absence of affection? Moreover, our

future prospects, as I explained to your father, are by no means to be despised, even in a worldly point of view. Honest John Company—blessings on him! provides handsomely for his servants, and his servants' widows and children. And here is our army, at this moment, investing a city gorged with riches, such as we should once have thought were to be met with no where out of the Arabian Nights ; and we shall take it too ; of that there is no question. We shall have Tippoo at our feet ere many days be over, and the humblest subaltern amongst us will be a made man. I shall soon, please God ! have enough to help my father, and to render me a fitter suitor for you, my own Mary, than I am now considered. You talk, in one of those old-sad letters, of 'our youth wasting in vain hopes.' But, Mary, they are *not* vain ; and that you should call them so, gave me then, and gives me now, a bitter pang. What

although you could not come out to me then, nor may perhaps be permitted to do so when the war is over ? In four years' time I may, perhaps, take my furlough, and come home for you ; and do you imagine that you will be less dear to me at twenty-seven, than you were at seventeen ?

“ Here I would have paused, but another recollection comes over me, and I must add a few words in a different strain. We are on the eve of a battle, and though I believe it to be also the eve of a victory, who knows if I may survive to witness it ? Long ere this letter can reach you, my Mary, the heart that so deeply and so truly loved you may have ceased to beat. But should it indeed be so, remember that I loved you to the last, that my last thought and last prayer were for you ; that your dear image was as vividly imprinted on my memory, as in the hour after we had parted last on earth. Remember this, my beloved ; and remember

that if the departed be still permitted to watch over the objects of their human affection, I shall often be near you ; and ever be praying for you, as I do now, in the last words I may ever address to you. May God bless and keep you, my Mary ! And may _____"

Here the letter came abruptly to a close; for at the instant these words were written, one of Musgrave's native attendants, entering the camp, delivered to him a bulky packet, the worn and dirty state of whose outer cover proclaimed the length of time during which it must have been travelling about ere it reached its destination. It was accompanied by a letter from the house of agency through whose hands all his Indian affairs, passed, informing him that it had been entrusted to the care of some private individual to bring out, and had been carried to the other side of India before finding its way to him. It had now come up to the

camp along with the other dispatches from the Presidency.

Musgrave took up the packet, and examined it curiously with a strange presentiment of evil, he knew not why. The address was so much rubbed and effaced that he could not at first recognize the hand, but suddenly the truth flashed upon him. It was that of Mr. Charlton, the father of Mary! The very pulsations of the young soldier's heart seemed to stand still, as with a desperate assumption of calmness he proceeded to cut the pack thread that secured the parcel, and unfold its various covers. At last the contents lay before him; with what feelings he beheld them, it were vain to attempt relating.

There were his own letters to Mary, the unbroken series, received up to a period eight months back, the date at which the parcel had been put up. There all the love-tokens which had passed between them; - the bunch of withered violets, the first offering

he had ever made her; and how did the sight of them recall the bright spring day, the woodland ramble, the seat beneath the budding lime tree, at whose foot these violets grew! there was a gold locket containing his hair, and engraven with their united initials, upon whose purchase, the day before he sailed for Liverpool, he had expended the little sum which he could spare from his slenderly provided purse, in order to have one more last gift to send her. There was the broken piece of gold, still attached as in mockery, to the very ribbon at which it had hung; when he took it off his neck to exchange it for hers, during their parting at Gilsland; and there the little well worn Prayer book, the dearest and most sacred pledge of all, from between whose leaves, as he lifted it, fell a folded paper containing the curl of his hair which he had placed there, when with tears and passionate embraces, and stifled words of love and grief,

and perfect trust, they had pledged their faith to each other on the banks of the Irthing. There they lay before him, these silent tokens, not one of which but recalled a whole volume of the heart's most sacred history;—there they lay—returned—flung back, disowned by her, upon whose fidelity he would have staked existence one quarter of an hour before! They were accompanied by a letter from Mr. Charlton, enclosing one from his daughter, which, before doing more than glance at his, the forsaken lover mechanically opened and read, and re-read, with the bewildered and stupified feeling of one under the influence of a terrible dream. It was short, broken, almost incoherent; but its purport went to say that the reproaches of her own conscience, so long felt, yet resisted, had at last made themselves heard; and backed by the opinions of her whole family, had finally convinced her that it was not yet too late to break off an

engagement which had never had the hearty sanction of her father, which he had latterly more than ever disapproved, and upon which she could therefore hope for no blessing; an engagement, moreover, which was but wearing away the youth of both parties in vain regrets, and expectations yet more vain. She felt, she said, persuaded — and the bitter mockery of that false attempt at a shew of disinterestedness, cut more deeply than all the rest into Walter's soul — that she was acting for the best, in his case as in her own, by dissolving the unfortunate compact between them; and that he would feel it so in the end. Then followed a constrained expression of hopes that, should they ever meet again, it might at least be as friends; and the whole was wound up by a request that the letters and keepsakes of hers in Walter's possession might be returned, as she here returned his. This was all. Thus closed their inter-

course! No not quite thus. It appeared as if the letter had been meant for inspection by other eyes; for near the bottom of the page these lines were written, in a hurried, almost illegible hand—"Walter, I do not ask you to forgive! hate me—forget me—and may you yet find happiness with some one more worthy of you than ever I was!" Upon these words several large blots, as if of tears, had fallen and nearly effaced them. The letter contained no key to this abrupt termination to a bond which had now subsisted upwards of six years; and the parties to which, moreover, were not a mere boy and girl, but a man and woman fully competent to judge for themselves, and beyond the age when coercion could be exercised; but the deficiency was supplied by Mr. Charlton, who seemed resolved that Musgrave should lose no ingredient of the cup of bitterness pressed to his lips by her whom he had

loved as his own soul. His letter announced that his daughter was on the eve of uniting herself with a suitor who had honorably sought her through her father, and whose character, station, and fortune, were such as to ensure at once his approbation and the prospect of her future happiness. Sir Patrick Ruthven, a Scottish Baronet of ancient family and large property, would receive the hand of Mary with the full consent and satisfaction of all connected with her. And this being the case, Mr. Musgrave would at once acknowledge the propriety of thinking no more of one, who, long ere these lines could reach him, would be the wife of another.

Three days after the receipt of this letter, the insensible body of Walter Musgrave was extricated from beneath a heap of slain, in the breach at Seringapatam, which he had been amongst the first to mount. He had performed prodigies of rash and desperate

valour ; and it was at first believed by his sorrowing brother officers, that he had paid their forfeit with his life. This however was not the case. He arose at length from a couch of protracted fever and acute suffering, and returned to the duties of a soldier's life. But not as he had lain down did he arise again. During these weeks, comparatively few though they were, an age of "years—all winters"—had passed over body and soul. His clustering chesnut hair was bleached white as the locks of fourscore ; the smile was gone for ever from his lip ; the light from his eye. But what were these outward changes to the wreck, the blight, the desolation within ?

It was in the course of a tedious convalescence that Musgrave at length nerved himself to reply to the last letter of Mary ; and to collect and return to her, according to her request, the tokens of her old and now forgotten affection. This letter, enclosed in

a parcel addressed to "Lady Ruthven," was directed to the care of Mr Charlton, whom a few cold, calm, and haughty lines requested to forward it to his daughter, as containing the articles which she had requested to have sent back. This parcel and letter, of which we shall hereafter learn further tidings, did not for many months after this time reach the hands of her to whom they were addressed. But they had left those of Musgrave. The last link of the old chain, the last silver link of memory and habit, was ruthlessly severed, to unite no more ; and the young soldier, standing as it were upon the threshold of his early life, there bade it farewell for ever ; and at once, without pause or interval, passed from youth to age,—that age of the heart which is so much more dreary than the decay of the bodily frame. He did not sink, he did not withdraw from duty. These, his high principle, his energetic and unselfish nature, alike forbade.

But half a century of ordinary life has often effected a less total change in the feelings, the hopes, the entire tone of an individual character, than this brief period had wrought in him. Here then we take leave of him for the present, in order to follow the fortunes of her from whom it now appeared that his were for ever divided, but whose after story may afford some illustration of the solemn fact, that man is only so far, and no farther, the arbiter of his own destinies ; and that a deeper and more occult influence than he can fathom is at work alike upon his actions and their consequences.

CHAPTER III.

“ Away, away, my early dream
Remembrance never must awake
Oh, where is Lethe’s fabled stream?
My foolish heart be still, or break.’

Byron.

MARY CHARLTON had long been the wife of Sir Patrick Ruthven, ere the letter, announcing her desertion, reached her early lover; but for a lengthened space of time previous to her taking that decisive step, her fidelity to the absent Musgrave had been wavering, so as to render the task of finally uprooting it, less difficult. Hers was, in fact, though amiable, gentle, and affectionate, a character too facile, too much open to

the influence of vanity, to retain an abiding hold upon the past, the distant, and the unseen. And as time wore on, and her rare beauty, of that style which is somewhat late in developing itself into perfection, and, of course, retains its charm proportionably late, attracted suitor after suitor, whose successive dismissals proved a source of ever-increasing irritation to her father, some tinge of mortification mingled in her own feelings and her thoughts of the far-distant lover, who, to a mind so keenly alive to the impressions of the moment, and so little habituated to retire within itself, began, in the long and irregular interval between his letters, to assume almost a shadowy and unreal character in her eyes. These unworthy feelings were at first dismissed as soon as experienced, with a bitter pang of self-reproach; especially when some of those affectionate letters, overflowing with the warmest emotions of a heart so devoted,

and so perfectly confiding, would arrive to dispel the chilly haze and dimness of absence, and restore the living, loving, trusting Walter, in all the vividness of reality, to his wonted place in her thoughts. But gradually they arose unbidden, and were not dismissed ; and thence the transition to their being called up and encouraged, was a very easy one; above all, when smarting under the taunts and sneers of her elder sister, the Bessy to whom Musgrave had too truly alluded in their last interview as never having been his friend; or suffering from the reproaches which her father so constantly levelled at her persistance in what he assured her was a hopeless engagement. The gentle and somewhat timid temper of her mother, had even become influenced previous to her death, by his perpetual recriminations, so far, at least, as to regret the fact of Mary's having thus fettered herself in early youth,

although nothing would have induced her to lend any active assistance in breaking off a compact so solemn: but her evident despondency on the subject added to her daughter's; and after her mother's death, every influence around her was thrown into the same scale, and nothing left to counterbalance it, but her own hesitating and unsteady heart.

For two successive seasons—during the autumn preceding, and that following her mother's death, which had taken place in the early winter, Mary had met with Sir Patrick Ruthven, at Gilsland Spa. This gentleman was at that time in his thirtieth year, gallant and attractive in manner, and belonging to a class of society of which she had had no previous experience; and his attentions to her from the first moment of their meeting, were devoted and nearly irrepressible. He was, in fact, fascinated by her beauty; but at least equally attracted

by her father's known reputation for wealth, and avowed determination to portion his daughters, according to their meeting his wishes with regard to their choice of partners for life. A matter this of more consequence than was suspected, to the gay and distinguished baronet, whose extensive property had not descended to him free from encumbrances in the first instance, nor been improved by his own free life and expensive habits. It were tedious to trace the progress of his suit, from the first difficult and almost reluctant refusal, to the renewed and still more impassioned advances, which, backed by Mr. Charlton's ambition, and his pride in such a suitor coming forward for his daughter, finally prevailed over Mary's truth and constancy. And yet, when it came to the last, the final rupture of the tie, when she had fairly suffered herself to be wrought upon to abandon the brave, the honourable, the upright lover

of her youth, for a man into whose private character, neither she nor any one connected with her had ever thought it necessary to enquire, it were an outrage upon woman's nature to say that her heart was not wrung within her. Bitter, as unavailing, were the tears that poured from her eyes, as she collected the old love-tokens, long laid aside and unlooked at, but not forgotten; and for the last time gazed upon the handwriting on the cover of those letters, at whose contents she durst not have ventured a glance. More bitter still were the tears which fell on the last few words of her own heartless letter, hastily added after it had been submitted to the inspection of her father. But the tears were dried; the intruding memories buried; and if their ghosts would assuredly yet arise to haunt her, that thought was not suffered to mingle in the excitement of the engrossing present time.

Mary's acceptance of Sir Patrick Ruthven had taken place at Gilsland; and shortly after she had returned home with her father and sister, he arrived there from paying several visits in Cumberland, and remained some time as their guest. Here it was, in the intimate fellowship of domestic life, that the consciousness began to dawn upon her of the difference between her affianced husband and her own family;—the thousand minute discrepancies of thought and habit which rendered amalgamation between them impossible. Sir Patrick's refinement was not of a mental cast; to this, his tone of mind, his addiction to strong animal excitement of every kind, the freedom and license of his career, were entirely opposed; but to the advantages of a fine person he added the natural ease, the inborn graces of the highly descended gentleman, the perfect self-possession imparted by early habits of command, all the nameless something in short

which *nascitur non fit*, and which in itself affords so irrefragable a refutation of the preposterous dogma, that all men are born equal. Seeing him beside her father and brothers, even Mary was forced to admit that they looked, and moved, and spoke like beings of a different species ; and worse, that Sir Patrick was fully conscious of this, and took no pains to hide the consciousness, though without transgressing the limits of good-breeding in the manifestation of his feelings.

Between him and her sisters too, there was a gulph, though not so deep and wide. Still, they were not sympathetic. Bessy and Jane, both older, and Lydia, several years younger than Mary, were all very different from her. She had more natural elegance of mind, and the refining influences of strong feeling, though counteracted in their beneficial effects upon her character, had tended to impart much grace and softness to her

manner. They, on the contrary, their higher and deeper emotions never having been called forth, had passed through a gay and noisy life of provincial visiting and provincial flirtation, which had greatly deteriorated their not originally very distinguished style and tone. It was easy to perceive that Sir Patrick would never be cordially intimate with his wife's family, that he could not and would not become one of them. And an involuntary sense of contrast would often force itself upon Mary's mind, and summon up a host of memories which she would fain have laid in oblivion, when some private, but not less acute, feeling of mortification was called forth by the egotistical disregard to those of others, lurking beneath his agreeable and courteous exterior. Then she would recal another, the least egotistical of human beings, who,—perfect gentleman though nature had stamped him from very boyhood,—different though he too was from

her family,—had never done, or said, or looked any thing to bring the difference home to her, in the way in which it was now perpetually brought; who, inexperienced and untutored though he was, was a model of that true courtesy, that considerate gentleness, which emanate from a gentle heart. An incident, trifling in itself, served on one occasion to bring these recollections in an acutely vivid form before her; occurring as it did, on a certain day when some manifestation on Sir Patrick's part, of the sentiments we have described, had caused her more than ordinary pain.

It was a beautiful day, early in September, and Mary and Lydia Charlton, escorted by Sir Patrick, and followed by a servant, had set out on a long ride. The route they followed led through the extensive woods which had once formed part of the chase pertaining to Wansted Hall; and which in their wild unpruned luxuriance,

still preserved much of the character of forest land. Here, crossing a grassy glade, whence up a long vista formed by what had once been a straight avenue through the chase, might be discerned the ancient gable-ends, mullioned casements, and fantastic chimney-stacks of the hall, the party came suddenly upon another horseman emerging at a leisurely pace from this very avenue.

“ La ! Mary ! ” exclaimed Lydia, who was a little in advance of the others, “ I declare there is Philip Selby; I thought he was with his regiment in Canada.”

Mary became deadly pale, and as suddenly flushed crimson, on catching the keen, enquiring, and somewhat astonished glance of her future husband, called up by her visible agitation at mention of that name. Its owner at the same moment rode up to her side, with an exclamation of pleasure.

“ I am delighted to have chanced upon you, Miss Mary Charlton ! ” he said. “ I had

just discovered that I should not have time to call at the Grange."

"Thank you, Mr. Selby," she replied, "in that case I am doubly glad that we have met. Sir Patrick Ruthven," she added, with a sudden start of recollection, "Mr. Philip Selby."

Both gentlemen bowed; Sir Patrick with an air of almost haughty distance, which however was lost upon the young soldier, whose salutation was cool and indifferent, as to any one introduced by chance, and whom he was not likely to see again.

"I have been," he said, addressing Mary, "to the hall, to call upon the old Squire and his lady. I am only passing through the neighbourhood by mere accident, and am engaged to dine at Hazelshaws, where I fear I shall be late at any rate, for I have sat longer than I intended, and it is a good ten miles ride from this. But it was many a long day since I had been at old Wansted,

and I could not tear myself away. It felt like going back a dozen years of one's life to be there again."

"When did you return to England, Mr. Selby?" enquired Lydia.

"Only two months ago," he replied; "but I did not come down to the North for several weeks after I landed. And I shall not be long here now that I am come. We are ordered still farther north, into Scotland, —to—."

"Ah! indeed!" exclaimed Lydia, glancing at Mary with a significant smile, "into Sir Patrick's county, I declare." Visions of future visits thither, of gay balls, and flirtations with red coats, and of appearing as a dashing English belle, amongst the diminished lustres of the Northern fair, began to flit, in rapid succession, through her imagination; and she looked round at her future brother-in-law, in the expectation of hearing him say something civil on the

subject of their future chances of meeting, to the friend of his betrothed. But Sir Patrick had withdrawn his attention, as well as his presence, from the conversation, and was slowly sauntering his horse along the edge of a thicket, and with a careless and listless gesture throwing out the long lash of his hunting whip at intervals, to curl round a pliant branch of hazel, and bring it down to a level with himself, then suddenly untwining the thong, and letting it rebound to its former position. Young Selby, the while, had pursued the track of thought which evidently filled his mind, in his conversation with Mary.

“ The old Squire is much fallen off. He looks very much aged since I saw him last. I did not see the young Squire, as they still call him, though he is no such chicken now. He has a dozen years the advantage of Wat, you know. But both the old gentleman and lady spoke more kindly, with more

interest of Wat, poor fellow, than they used to do. I was quite glad to see the change."

Mary could not answer, her heart was throbbing too fast and painfully. It was clear that Philip Selby knew nothing of the alteration in her position. How should he? He was by his own account merely passing through that country, and it was not likely that the proud denizens of the Hall should make the concerns of their despised neighbours at the Grange a topic of conversation to a stranger; however much they might in the fashion of provincial magnates at feud with those in their vicinity, enjoy a gossip at their expence with a mutual acquaintance living near.

"It is an age since I have heard from him," pursued Selby. "The letters come very irregularly I think. But I daresay you hear often enough, Miss Mary?" He glanced at her burning cheek, and the palpi-

tation which visibly heaved her bosom through her riding-habit, and, fortunately for her--awaited no reply.

“I beg your pardon. I have been rude I fear. Never mind my nonsense, Miss Mary. You know Wat and I never had a secret from each other; and I have been so long away, and have seen so little of you since the old days at the Vicarage, that I declare I forgot the difference time makes. I could fancy we were all boys and girls again, and all these long years a dream. Dear me!” he continued, gazing around him, “it is not easy to think otherwise just here. What throngs of old thoughts these woods of Wansted bring back again! Do you remember our nutting parties, Miss Mary? Do you recollect one beautiful October day—I have never forgotten it—when we all went out to the hazel coppices beyond this, through these very paths? I seem to see the whole lot of us now, your brother Tom and sister Jane,



and all, with our baskets and hooked sticks; the *cleekies*, as that Scotch fellow, Jerdon, who was with us at the Vicarage, called them. He was one of the party that day, wasn't he?"

"Yes," said Mary. "Yes I remember."

"Poor fellow! he died in Jamaica, I understand, three years ago. There would be strange work, searching over the face of the earth, to get the old Vicarage set together again; those who are left. Jones is dead too, long ago. But that day, Miss Mary! What fun we had to be sure! The baskets and bags we filled; and how miraculously your basket was replenished, however often you emptied it into the biggest bag! And then, in that thick tangled covert, you lost your shoe—and the stumps hurt your foot; and then—do you recollect?"—with a laughing glance at her—"how Wat Musgrave and I carried you a-cushion down to a soft bank of moss; and

how Miss Jane scolded, and Wat went off to hunt for the shoe, and declared he would search all night but he would find it? And he did; and brought it back in triumph; and claimed as a reward that he might go on his knees and put it on for you. And he did that too."

"Dear me!" giggled Lydia, "how very gallant. I wonder if Sir Patrick hears?"

"And our merry walk home through the moonlight," pursued Selby, who, embarked in the entrancing tide of early reminiscences, was unconscious of the interruption; "and the jolly tea at your father's, and the country dances and jigs after it, all in our torn nutting dresses, down in the hall, to old Joe Forster's violin? Light-hearted days they were! But —" for another glance at Mary shewed him her now pale countenance and eyes brim full of irrepressible tears,—"but we must all keep up our hearts, Miss Mary, for though we are widely scattered since

these old days, yet that can't and won't last for ever. Depend upon it there is a good time coming. It is a pleasure to light upon an old friend in this unexpected way, meanwhile; and I wish I could have seen more of you just now."

I wish you could have gone on to the Grange, Mr. Selby, and dined with us. Papa would have been so glad to see you," said Lydia; who dearly loved what she was wont to denominate "a beau," and thought she perceived some capabilities of filling that part in young Selby's handsome face and person.

" Thank you, I am sure I wish I could. I wish I could be two gentlemen at once, as Paddy says," smilingly replied he, " for I should like to dine at the Grange, and I want to go to Hazelshaws also. But being under an engagement there, settles the matter. Preciously late I shall be too! But there was no resisting a talk over those old stories;

and I hope it has given you some pleasure to be reminded of them too, Miss Mary? For my part, I think to look back upon one's early happy days, may be mournful, but it is as often very pleasing and comforting, and good for one. I have found it so, many a time, and I think it must always be so unless one has done something to make looking back a pain and a ground for self reproach. But I won't detain you any longer just now. Good bye, ladies. Remember me kindly to all at the Grange." And with a cordial shake of the hand to each, and touching his hat to Sir Patrick, he galloped off through the forest paths.

"Your friend's conversation seems very interesting,"—observed the former, as riding up close to the sisters, he again directed a scrutinizing glance on Mary's pale face, dimmed eyes, and quivering lip; "very affecting, I ought rather to have said. It must be gratifying to him to have excited so

much emotion in so short a time." Sir Patrick spoke smilingly, but something of a sneer, something of jealous mistrust, lurked under the smile, as Mary with a woman's quick perception, as well as with the cowardice of conscious guilt, instantly felt. She swallowed down her emotion, drove back the sob that was struggling upwards from her heart, and strove to assume a cheerful air as she replied:—

"I daresay it seems ridiculous, it is quite foolish, I know—" she was forced to pause a minute, then go on more composedly. "Mr. Selby was talking of some of our old playfellows who are dead. There are so many changes amongst us since the old days, that I could not—"

"Playfellows!" said Sir Patrick, with the same mistrustful glance. "This gentleman was your playfellow, was he?"

"Dear, yes!" exclaimed Lydia, coming up, as she fancied, to her sister's assistance.

“ We had so many amongst the Vicarage boys; my sisters more than I, being older. Phil Selby was before my day; and so were Jack Gervase, and Sam Jerdon, and Frank Tuffnell, and—”—here the speaker was seized with a fit of coughing—“ and several more whom I seem to know perfectly by name. My brothers, Tom and Dick, being educated at the Vicarage, used to bring their companions home of a holiday to the Grange. And Phil Selby was always a pet with my sisters. He is the eldest son of Mr. Selby, of the Dene, not far from Gilsland. You have seen his brother, Sir Patrick. He came up to the Shaws, one day, with a party, while we were there.”

“ Very possibly,” said Sir Patrick. “ And this youth is in the army?”

“ Yes, and just come home from Canada. He’s been four years there with his regiment.”

“ Ah! ”

“ And is ordered north with it, to your

county, immediately; so I daresay we—you—" added Lydia, instinctively checking herself, "may often meet hereafter. Many an old story there is to talk over, to be sure! You should hear Jane's anecdotes of some of the Vicarage boys, Jack Gervase above all!"

"They must be very edifying, I have no doubt," said Sir Patrick, with the same smile as before. "Quite a free-and-easy club it seems to have been. But—" his quick eye catching the painful blush which suffused Mary's countenance, as her more refined perceptions made her sensible of the implied censure lost upon her sister, who was only conscious of what she often felt, a disagreeable sense of restraint in Sir Patrick's company, without knowing why—"but I am not so hard-hearted as not to know the pleasure of being kindly remembered. I would submit, dear Mary, to be called Pat Ruthven all the rest of my life,

to be assured that such tender tears would be shed over my memory if I were gone. You must forgive my half grudging them to another." He laid his hand as he spoke, on the pommel of her saddle, and looked in her face with a smile of a more agreeable character than the former; and Mary too smiled and blushed, not, as before, from pain, and acknowledged to herself the charm of her lover's manner, when he so pleased. But she could not quite forget, she could not quite get over being complimented, as it were, at the expense of her sister. It added bitterness to the memories which the sight and the conversation of Philip Selby, had too effectually roused to be easily laid to sleep. And as, quickening their horses' speed to a canter, they swept lightly on through the woodland glades, and round the base of the low hill on which the hazel coppices grew, beneath the upper stream of gay and lively talk which they maintained,

a deep dark under-current kept slowly flowing on, in her inmost heart, on whose still surface was reflected, as on a mirror, the whole scene of that far distant day when the youthful nutting party had assembled there. Another voice was in the ear of her spirit, than that which was audible to her bodily senses; another, and a brighter smile, before her "inward eye," than that visible to the outer. Still more vividly did this illusion possess her on their homeward way, along the same paths which they had trodden, on that moonlit October evening. She could have fancied the present a strange troubled dream; but long that night, after her sisters were sunk in sleep, did the sobs and tears which she had no longer a motive for repressing, bear testimony to its reality, and utter the requiem of the buried Past.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his
drunken sleep—
To thy widowed marriage pillows, to the tears that thou
wilt weep;
Thou shalt hear the ‘never, never,’ whispered by the phan-
tom years,
And a voice from out the distance in the ringing of thine
ears:
And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy
pain;
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow—get thee to thy rest
again!”

Alfred Tennyson.

IT was a wild night in March, when Lady Ruthven, who had now been nearly eighteen months married, sat alone in the spacious drawing-room of her husband’s fine old house, in a northern county of Scotland. This apartment, though richly furnished in a

somewhat antiquated style, was pervaded by an air of singular gloom, and almost of discomfort, enhanced by the dim light afforded by a single pair of candles, placed on a small tea-table, beside the sofa of its solitary inmate, close to the large fire-place. There was no trace of any other occupants in the room; but from some distant part of the mansion many loud sounds were audible, of a character strangely contrasting with its sombre silence. Thence came shouts of laughter, coarse uproarious merriment as it seemed, increasing in uproar as the night wore on, and mingled with these occasional snatches of Bacchanalian songs, and the clatter and jingle of glasses, distinctly heard whenever the door opened upon the revellers. This it not unfrequently did, on which occasions a voice, in the loud unmodulated tones of intoxication, would call for another bottle, or some blustering half incoherent order would be issued and obeyed.

Such on this night, and on many a night, were the orgies for which Mary Ruthven found herself deserted in the dwelling of her husband. The profligacy concealed beneath the polish of Sir Patrick Ruthven's manners had not been long in unveiling itself, and appearing in a light conspicuous even for the license of that day and country ; and the wife who for his sake had violated her first faith—discovered when too late, in the words of the mournful old Scottish song, that

“ She wadna’ hae trowed the browst she brewed
Wad taste sae bitterlie.”

Her situation was in truth a very sad one. Separated from her own social, lively home, and large family circle, she began to feel herself becoming estranged from her father and her brothers and sisters. Sir Patrick was too politic to offend his wealthy father-in-law ; but independently of the impas-

sable gulf between their habits and ideas to which we have already alluded, nothing could have been more intolerable to him than having his wife's family witnesses of the life he led; and thus he had from the beginning set aside, or thrown cold water upon any proposal of Mary's to have any of them with her. She was emphatically a stranger in a strange land; looked down upon by some of her husband's connexions as a presumptuous interloper; shunned by others as the wife of a man whose conduct was beginning to procure him a very undesirable notoriety, and too often neglected by him for whom she had placed herself in such a position. She had not very long since become a mother; and even then, at that period of suffering and long weakness, during which woman claims most consideration and tenderness from man; and when, especially on its first occurrence, the coldest and most indifferent of men are usually warmed

into joy and kindness, her life, and that of her infant, had been more than once endangered from the distress and terror occasioned her, by behaviour on his part, of a worse and more outrageous nature than she had ever before witnessed. Prevented, in a great measure, from associating with her own sex, she found herself exposed, as on the present occasion, to the company of men, many of them almost the last she would have wished to see; too often compelled to come into contact with them; and she now sat in terror lest some intruder should enter her presence in a condition which should fill her, as such sights must do all women of delicacy, with loathing and disgust to contemplate.

But of this consummation there seemed little risk that night: the revel below stairs was evidently too deep and serious to be so interrupted, and when at last Lady Ruthven started, and felt her heart leap to her throat

on the opening of the drawing-room door, it admitted, not an unwelcome visitor, but a servant, bringing her a large parcel which, he said, had just arrived by the carrier; whose periodical visits were in those days the grand events of a Scottish country-house, as forming its only link with other parts of the land. The outside of this parcel was addressed by her father, and she hastily undid it, expecting to find it contain many letters and tokens of remembrance from her home; but one letter alone met her sight, along with an inclosure, in a worn and frayed cover, on the first glance at which, the blood forsook her cheeks, and her heart for an instant seemed to stand still. The letter, from Mr. Charlton, informed her that this packet had just arrived from Madras!

Long did Mary sit, in a species of stupefaction, gazing on what she absolutely lacked courage to open; till at last, nerving herself by a strong effort, she applied her trembling

fingers to the task, and first of all its contents drew forth a letter, in the once-familiar hand-writing of Walter Musgrave.

Musgrave to Lady Ruthven.

“This letter will not reach you, Mary, until you have been long a wife. By the time I received yours, the period for reproach and upbraiding was already past; nor do I now write to utter either. I enclose with this, a letter which I was engaged in writing to you, at the very moment when your last communication, and your father’s, reached me. The unfinished sentence at which it ends I broke off to open your packet. This, I think, will come more home to your heart, to your *conscience*, than any reproaches that I could heap upon you. It will shew you how little I was prepared for the blow your hand has inflicted. Had I,—as I *hoped*,—may God forgive me!—fallen in the battle which immediately followed, you would have

received that letter, together with the articles I now send you, and a few lines, written in the first moment of agony, after I awoke to the consciousness of the fact that you were lost to me. I left them amongst my baggage, addressed to be forwarded in the event of my death. But many weeks' hovering betwixt death and life, have substituted a dreary calm for the first tempest of indignation and despair; and I can now sit down, *for the last time*, to write to you with composure. *Then* I could not realize the idea that it was for the last time. It seemed so impossible to exist, and not to refer every thought and every feeling to you, who for years, since my boyhood, never had been an hour absent from my thoughts. *Now* I can understand our altered position. I feel that there is a great gulf between us; and it is, as it were, from the opposite side of the gulf that I now address you, Mary,—you,—my affianced wife,—mine in the sight of heaven,

who have deliberately given yourself to another.

" You tell me at the close of your letter, to hate, to forget you;—you say you do not ask me to forgive;—you bid me look forward to happiness with some one else. I can believe that there are men to whom it would be a relief to exchange love for hatred in such a case as mine; but such is not my feeling. I have loved you for years and years, how truly—how faithfully—how devotedly—the All-seeing Eye has been witness; and how could I learn to hate you now? As little could I, if I wished it, learn to forget you. I cannot tell how it might have been with me at home, but there is something in the life a man leads in India, that, if he has any strong feelings, deepens and intensifies them. So much isolation from society,—such constant warnings of the instability of life,—so many long hot hours of solitary thought, all lead the mind to

dwell upon any one engrossing idea, till it becomes possessed with it, to a degree that it could not be where there was more external excitement to distract the thoughts. You cannot, at a word, give me back the indifference that you took from me years ago. And you have taken far more from me, Mary! You have taken that which no effort of yours, or of any one's, can restore to me again. Can you give me back the faith, the perfect confidence, the credulous fulness of belief in you, and in all human kind, for your sake, of which you have robbed me? Can you give me back the energy, the hopeful spirit, the joyful anticipation of the future;—can you restore the youth to my heart? In breaking your troth to me, you have broken my trust in all things earthly; and when you can restore that, then talk to me of finding happiness with another!

“ Yet I forgive you, Mary. I do from my

very heart—I feel no anger, only the bitterest grief when I think of you; for I cannot so far mock you as to utter the form of words expressing a wish for your happiness—that happiness which I know that you will never find. You have discarded the faith of your early years; but unless you could also discard memory, unless you could blot out the past, how could you be happy? I return your letters; I return all the little tokens that I have received from you—you may burn them; but a voice will yet speak from their ashes; you will not forget that they have been. I return the most precious of all, the Prayer-book, which has been my companion at night and morning, ever since I took it from your trembling hand beneath our old trysting-tree. Henceforth I shall use my own again; shall you do the same by yours?

“Two things alone I have retained; they can tell no tales. These are the long ringlet

of your hair, and the other half of the broken gold piece. Let the two halves lie together, though they can be united no more. And by that same token, Mary, I have still one word to say to you. Should I ever return to England, and you be in prosperity, I pray and I hope that we may meet no more. But it may be otherwise with you;—and should it be so,—should trouble, or hardship, or unkindness, overtake you,—then, by the memory of that which we have been to each other, turn to me in your sorrow, Mary!—and I, who would have shielded you with my life from all sorrow, will, if I can, be your helper still.

“ Now, for the last time, farewell.

“ WALTER MUSGRAVE.”

It was with a blanched cheek and quivering lip that Mary read this letter, warm as it seemed from the bleeding heart of him whom she had so basely injured, and who

yet preserved his own single-hearted generosity of spirit in the midst of desertion and maddening wrong. Again and again she perused it ; then with a trembling hand unfolded the remaining contents of the packet, the memorials of her forsaken love. There they lay, spread out before her, those old keepsakes, those old letters, terrible though mute witnesses against her. She turned them all over, she read once more the two letters of Musgrave's, so wofully different in tone ! As she laid down the last, a burst of half insane laughter came roaringly on her ears from the sudden opening of the dining-room door below. She shuddered at the sound, and with a stifled ejaculation of "Walter ! Walter !" flung her arms over the sofa-cushion, hid her face in them, and wept and sobbed as if her very heart would break.

Long, long she wept, and longer sat, the passion of tears all spent, in dull calm

exhaustion; while the night crept on, the fire smouldered into ashes, and the candles burnt low and dim. The wind, which had been high all the evening, now began to rise more loudly, in wild fitful blasts; sweeping round the old house, moaning in the wide chimneys, and shaking the shrunken window frames, till even the heavy curtains of faded crimson velvet, which hung before those of the drawing-room, stirred drearily in return. And all the while the uproar below stairs went on increasing in loudness and in distinctness as the hour waxed later. Suddenly there was a still louder, an angry tone in its sound. The dining-room door seemed burst open by some rough assault; a confused noise of many feet resounded in the stone entrance hall, and a noise still more confused, of loud, furious, incoherent voices in violent contention, mingled with blows and scuffling. Lady Ruthven, becoming as pale as death, started to her feet

and grasped at a chair beside her, just as the door was flung open, and her maid, a young English girl, rushed pallid and trembling into the room.

“ Oh, ma’am, oh, my lady,” she panted out, “ what ever is to become of us? There’s such a dreadful quarrel going on below stairs. Sir Patrick and two of the gentlemen are fighting, and the rest all talking and pushing about, and doing no good—for there’s not one on ‘em can stand on his legs; and John, and Peter, and the butler, are little better; though they’re doing their best to part ‘em, and to force Sir Patrick back into the dining-room till the rest get away. I hear some one coming up, my lady—what shall we do?”

And at that moment the door was dashed against the wall, and two gentlemen staggered into the room, flushed from intoxication; the clothes of both disordered, and partially torn, and the face of one covered

with blood, from a cut in the forehead, apparently inflicted by a broken glass. A hideous and revolting spectacle he was, as he made his uneven way towards the trembling and terrified women.

“Where is he?” he exclaimed—“where is the scoundrel? You had better not attempt to hide him from me, or—” and a string of appalling imprecations followed.

“Madam, madam,” burst in the other, seemingly not so totally lost to shame and decency as his companion, “excuse our—our—in—intrusion. We have both been gr—gr—grossly insulted by your husband, and must demand—”

“Leave the room, gentlemen!” said Lady Ruthven, drawing herself up to her full height—her whole form dilating—her eyes flashing with a fire totally foreign to her nature, but called forth by the extremity of insulted female dignity—“leave the room instantly. How dare you presume to in-

trude in this manner upon an unprotected woman?"

"Who cares?" stuttered the first speaker, as his companion caught him by the arm; "I say I must and will have satisfaction."

And he was staggering forward, when the other, in a measure recalled to himself by this unexpected rebuff, with a confused attempt at something like an apology, succeeded in arresting his progress, and dragging him at last from the room.

Mary sank breathless upon her seat, her bosom heaving as if it would burst; and the bewildered English girl sobbed and wrung her hands, and protested against "the shocking wickedness of these dreadful Scotch gentlemen!"

Meanwhile the clamour below still continued. It seemed as if the maddened guests were in the act of departing, and unable to find—while the stupefied servants were unable to assist them in finding—their

hats, their great-coats, or even their way to the outer door and their respective vehicles. And over all the din, arose from the dining-room the shouts and furious curses of Sir Patrick, whom it appeared that those who had interposed in the late quarrel had succeeded in imprisoning there. At last the confusion began to subside; carriages were heard departing, and horses galloping wildly off with their reckless riders. A pause ensued; the dining-room door was opened, and then began again the storm of drunken fury, the insane threats, the oaths, the vengeance denounced upon his servants by their master, for daring to frustrate his attempt to chastise his insulters.

Lady Ruthven sat as if petrified—unable to quit the room where she was—listening to all in perfect stillness. The loud voice ceased at length—fell into low muttered sounds; steps were heard—irregular and shuffling steps—ascending the staircase, and

with a heavy lurch against the half-opened door there staggered in the figure of Sir Patrick, his dress and hair wildly disordered, and every feature of his fine countenance distorted by rage and intoxication. In his hand he held a lighted candle, which, as his wavering motion swayed it to and fro, kept pouring a stream of melting wax over his clothes and down to the floor.

“So, madam,” stammered he, as he advanced to his trembling wife, “you are here? I presume it was by your orders that this—this—insult was put upon me?” He seized her arm, and dragged her towards him.

“Dear Sir Patrick,” she answered, in a gentle voice, “it is very late; had you not better go to bed?”

“Bed! bed be —!” He grasped her still more fiercely. “You—you think to put me off so, do you? Insolent, meddling —! how durst you interfere with me?”

“Call the men, Phœbe! call the men!”

gasped Lady Ruthven, as, backing towards the door, he kept dragging her after him. The maid, half wild with terror, sprang shrieking from the room, and her voice echoed loud and shrilly along the passages, while she fled for help, almost expecting to find her lady a corpse on her return. The sound of her cries only seemed to exasperate the infuriated man; who, dropping the candle which he still held, amongst the cushions of a sofa, made a clutch at his wife with his disengaged hand, and caught by a gold chain which she wore round her neck. It snapped in two with the sudden jerk, and he lost his balance, and stumbled backwards over a footstool to the ground, pulling her down with him, and continuing with furious imprecations to hold her fast, while she screamed aloud in the extremity of fear.

At this moment hasty footsteps were heard upon the stairs, and a gentleman rushing in, with an exclamation of "Sir Patrick!"

for shame! for pity's sake!" flung himself upon his prostrate host, whose grasp of his wife it was, however, no easy matter to unloose. This unexpected auxiliary was almost instantly followed by two men-servants, who, although not many degrees more sober than their master, succeeded with some little difficulty in extricating their lady. Then, while Mary, nearly fainting, was carried to the sofa by the visitor who had come to her assistance, they at last prevailed upon her frantic husband to let them raise him from the floor, and lead him to his own apartment. As they did so, a sudden effort on his part to escape from them, sent all three staggering with great force against a small table, on which stood some beautiful specimens of Dresden china, keepsakes presented to Mary, at her marriage, by one of her brothers. The table upset with a prodigious crash and clatter, and the costly toys lay in fragments on the floor. Even at that

moment of shame and terror, the sound of their fall sent a bitter pang to the heart of Mary, as she remembered when and with what anticipations they had been bestowed upon her. Raising herself from the sofa, she found herself alone with the gentleman who had rescued her, for Phœbe, on her knees at the extremity of the long apartment, was absorbed in gathering up and lamenting over the shattered china. She looked in his face for the first time, as he stood a few paces from her, leaning on the mantel-piece, and recognized Philip Selby!

This young officer, whose regiment, it may be remembered, was quartered in the county town, had in fact been one of the guests at that day's dinner, and had been in the very act of departing from the house, when the sounds above stairs arrested him. Originally less intoxicated than the other actors in the night's disgraceful scene, the shock of what he had just witnessed had

restored his senses, and he now stood gazing on Lady Ruthven, with a countenance strongly expressive of the grief and pity which he felt. This was not of course the first meeting they had had since her establishment in her husband's house. They had repeatedly encountered each other in society, but never without pain on one side, and awkwardness on the other. All former sensations of the sort were, however, as nothing compared with what Mary now experienced, in discovering him to be her rescuer; and completely unnerved and bereft of her self-possession, she sank back in her seat at the sight of him, and, with a heaving sob, covered her face with her hands. This motion of hers seemed to arouse him, and he advanced close to her.

“Lady Ruthven,” he said in a low and agitated voice, “I have intruded upon you too long; but I—I could not—I—we were old friends once—and—. Come—I will say

it! It is honestly said and meant, and you will not be offended. You have my warm sympathy. Nay, now—I did not mean to set you a-crying. Never mind; try to keep up your heart. Things will come about, and it will all look brighter soon."

He paused, but Mary could not answer. Philip Selby's was not a heart to bear unmoved the sight of a woman's tears ; and it was in a faltering and husky tone that he resumed.

" I am glad to have come up stairs to see you once more. I did not like to venture, and yet I was loath to go, and not say good bye—a long good-bye." Mary started, and looked up for a moment. " Yes, we shall perhaps never meet again. The route is come, and our regiment goes to-morrow. We shall soon be sent abroad, I hope, and so —well, it must be said—good-bye. I wish —I wish I had not left you like this—but—" he could get no farther. Taking

her hand, he fervently squeezed and pressed it to his lips; then hurried from the room; and in a few minutes the sound of his horse's feet galloping down the avenue was audible in the stillness which had fallen upon the house.

That night, when Lady Ruthven, cold, silent, and trembling, laid herself down in her bed, no more tears escaped her eyes, nor a single sob her lips; but in her heart a voice which would not be stifled, kept repeating—“Walter, thou art avenged!”

CHAPTER V.

“—His early years

Were with him in his heart; his cherished hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
All pressed on him with such a weight, that now
This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed
A place in which he could not bear to live.”

Wordsworth.

AND now the course of our narrative, pausing, as it did, at the retributive sufferings of Walter Musgrave's faithless mistress, must sweep over a wide gap of time ere it be again resumed. Years, long years passed away, crowded with more momentous events than the world's history has ever before or since recorded, but with the stormy scenes of which our humble tale has no concern. Peace had long been restored to Europe,

and the whole aspect of society in Great Britain had undergone a wondrous change, whilst our hero still remained a self-exiled denizen of the East. Time had not stood still, during his long absence, even in the remote Northumbrian village, and the ancient hall, with which all his fondest and his most agonizing remembrances were connected. The share of wealth which had accrued to Musgrave, in common with the other victors of Seringapatam, and all that he could subsequently spare from his own moderate expenses, had been scrupulously devoted by him to the filial purpose which his heart had always cherished, that, namely, of lightening his father's declining years of the load of pecuniary difficulty which bore upon him so heavily. It seemed in his case that the disappointment, the total ruin which had overwhelmed his every personal hope and plan for the future, had turned all the energies of his generous nature into this channel.

His was one of those dispositions, at once elastic and unselfish, which, however deeply wounded, do not sink under the pressure of calamity; and which, although so far as their own immediate happiness is concerned, the world may be to them a desert, and the future a blank, can yet seek and find consolation in discovering what work remains for them to do on behalf of others, and in doing that work with all their might. He felt that to assist, and to provide for the comfort of his parents, was that marked out for him, and this duty supplied him with the motive to exertion which was necessary to render his existence endurable. Under the genial influence of his remittances from the East, a change very speedily became visible at the Hall, whose former condition of ruinous neglect was altered by degrees to one better according with its ancient respectability.

The correspondence of our hero was not extensive, beyond his occasional letters from

home; and those, less frequent, but longer and more interesting, which during twenty-five years of his long exile reached him from his old tutor, the Vicar of Wansted; and which only ceased at last with the good man's life. The Vicar was now the only person who ever mentioned to him the name of Charlton, or through whose means he still remained cognisant of the fortunes of Mary's family. These had in process of time undergone a strange mutation. Mr. Charlton, although previous to Walter's departure he had withdrawn from active business, still continued to be a sleeping partner in the manufacturing firm which had raised him to fortune; and into which two of his sons had in due course been admitted. This firm had continued for years one of the most flourishing in the North of England; its credit seemingly inexhaustible, and its resources daily multiplying; but an evil day at last arrived.

Just before the conclusion of the war it had embarked in some daring speculations, whose sudden failure resulted in bankruptcy, and involved Mr Charlton in ruin. He quitted Wansted Grange; his property was speedily sold, and the family departed, no one thereabouts knew whither. They had passed away like a dream from the place which had so long known them. He himself was understood not to have survived many months after his failure, and the subsequent fate of his children was unknown in his former neighbourhood. Not a trace of that gay and sociable household was left. And the comfortable dwelling, so long their residence, having been sold to a landed proprietor, who had no occasion for a mansion, was now tenanted by a farmer. Of Lady Ruthven, the Vicar had had but little to tell for long. She had never but once visited her father since her marriage; and that one time had arrived unaccompanied by

her husband, and having with her a little boy, her eldest child, whom she had subsequently lost. She had remained a couple of months with her family, and was thought much altered by all who saw her, faded in beauty, and depressed in aspect. Sir Patrick came to take her home, but only remained one day, and was seen by none of the neighbours. There were reports, the Vicar had added in writing this account to Musgrave —reports originating in the gossip of servants, that this splendid match was anything but a happy one, but for their truth he could not vouch: only he must confess that he was struck by the change in the lady's appearance. Besides this meagre intelligence, her former lover had heard of her, in the outset of her married life, from Philip Selby, with whom he had maintained a constant correspondence. He had received from his friend a detailed account of their memorable meeting in the Wansted woods,

while Selby was as yet in ignorance of her breach of faith to Musgrave; as, also, of their subsequent encounters in Scotland. Of their last painful meeting, the young soldier's narrative was especially long and minute; and afterwards followed up by the accounts, which had reached him from his former quarters, after he left, of Sir Patrick Ruthven's having been desperately wounded in a duel, arising out of the quarrel which on that night had taken place at his house. Throughout the long and tedious illness which ensued, his wife was said to have nursed him with the most devoted tenderness, and his own conduct, for some time after his recovery, was understood to have given promise of a reform, which, unhappily, did not long continue. Such was all the intelligence that ever reached Musgrave of her whom he had so fondly loved. This correspondence, so full of the kindly spirit of early friendship, was too soon at an end.

Philip Selby fell at Albuera; and another link, one of the strongest remaining, which bound his old playfellow to the happy past, was severed by his untimely fate.

“ Time rolled his ceaseless course,” and the restless wheel brought round an unexpected change in the fortunes of our hero. It had never occurred to him, while systematically restricting his own expenditure, in order to dispatch the larger supplies to his father, that he himself might ultimately reap the benefit of his self-denial and filial piety. He reckoned, as a matter of certainty, on his brother’s marrying, even though late in life ; and in fact, the idea of returning home at all was one that for years only arose in his own mind to be dismissed ; as connected with associations too exquisitely painful to be dwelt upon with calmness. So it was, however, that the young Squire, as Mr. Musgrave’s elder son continued to be called, died before his father, closing an inglorious life of

selfish profligacy, as an unmarried man. The aged parent did not long survive him; his lady had already been some years in her grave; and for twelve years after his death Wansted Hall stood tenantless, save that it was inhabited by two old family servants, a man and wife, who had charge of the mansion. Over their fulfilment of this trust the steward kept a strict watch, as indeed he did over the whole property, agreeably to the orders which he now regularly received from India. This was especially the case with regard to the poor upon it, to whom the utmost kindness was enjoined him by his absent master.

Thus placed by the course of events in possession of that estate which his own assistance had redeemed from ruin, it was inevitable that the new proprietor should at last turn his mind towards his native country. But many delays occurred ere his resolution to re-visit it could be carried into effect, and

his final arrangements for quitting the Company's service completed.

It was the Feast of All Saints, 1829 ; a calm, silent, pensive November afternoon, when a solitary traveller, not many hours alighted from a long journey, stood on the lawn, beneath the aged, and not yet quite leafless trees, in front of Wansted Hall. Seven-and-thirty years had elapsed since he had last beheld it. Seven-and-thirty years since Colonel Musgrave, the white-haired, withered man, at least ten years older in appearance than his actual age, now gazing upon the renovated house of his forefathers, beneath the mournful autumn sky, had been the bright boy Walter, fresh from his love-tryst on the banks of the Irthing ; his heart full of grief, yet full of hope and generous purpose, who on that moonlit summer night had bid the old ruined Hall a last farewell. Yet never did the remembrance of what occurred but yesterday, stand more vividly before the

mental eye, than did the minutest circumstance connected with that long-distant time, array itself before him now. There were no intervening events to soften and shade off the contrast between it and the present. There, where he last had stood a boy, he now found himself an aged man; and it seemed as if there were nothing to separate the periods. The gulf between youth and age, between hope and desolation, was abrupt and total; and its dreary brink was peopled by a whole army of phantoms.

“ The ghost of early Hope is there,
That linger’d long, and latest died;
Ambition all dissolved in air,
With phantom honours by his side.
What empty shadows hover nigh?
They once were Friendship, Truth, and Love.
Oh! die to thought—to memory die,
Since lifeless to my heart ye prove !”

It was with a sigh, almost a sob, whose passionate intensity savoured more of the boy, with his keen unsubdued feelings, than of the chilled and world-weary man, that

Musgrave turned from the contemplation of his dwelling-house. All was as still and silent there as on that night of his last parting; silent now from the influence of Time and Death, as then from indifference towards him who was about to leave it. He moved a few paces on towards an old and gigantic sycamore, which extended its huge limbs to a wide circuit on the lawn, beyond the square court on which the hall opened, and which was now approached by an old feeble man, the servant in whose charge the house had been placed since the Squire's death.

Old Ibbotson, whom his master had last seen in the prime of vigorous manhood, stood propping his shaking limbs upon his staff, beneath the tree; and as Musgrave drew near, pointed downwards to a scarce perceptible mound of turf at its foot.

"Here's the bit, Master Walter," said he. "They're both laid here. I dug their graves myself, a weary long time back, and not a

soul is left alive that minds o't but me."

"Here?" asked his master, bending over the spot.

"Aye, here, below your very feet, Master Walter."

It was the turf which covered the remains of his poor old favorites, the dun Galloway, and the house-dog, Towzer. Warm friends in life, they had not been long severed in death, and here they rested together, all unconscious of the tears which fell from eyes little inured to weep, as their solitary master stood beside their graves, and listened to old Ibbotson's tale, how the Galloway had never looked like the same beast after Master Walter left; and how old Towzer had pined from that day forth, and refused his food; and used constantly to be found stretched out at the door of a little room in the offices where Walter was in the habit of keeping some carpenter's tools, with which he frequently occupied himself. Here the faithful

creature would lie, fixing a wistful uneasy look on every one who approached him, but resisting every effort made to entice him away; and here at last he was one morning found dead. With what a choking sensation, as he heard this narrative, did his own parting words, his own anticipations, return upon Musgrave!

“Did I not say that my poor dog would mourn for me more than they all?” he inwardly ejaculated. “But those whose hearts I fancied my return would open to me—father, mother, brother, where are they?—*Mary, Mary* whom I loved and trusted as my own soul, where are you? Why am I desolate in my old age, mocked with the valueless wealth which none are left to share?”

The brief dark day was beginning to close; a stillness more profound than ever, a stillness that might be felt, hung brooding over the twilight scene; a falling leaf now

and then quietly stealing from the boughs above, was all of motion or apparent life to break the calm; and that, by a motion so like rest, so soft and dream-like, as rather added to its intensity. That calm and hush of nature, so unlike those of a summer eve, but so perfect of their kind, fell soothingly on the heart of the returned exile, who now, with folded arms and head bent low in thought, was slowly pacing the long-untrodden paths of the old-fashioned garden. It was up a long, straight, turf-en walk that he was proceeding, bordered on either side by flower-beds, and terminated at its farther extremity by a rustic chair, overhung by a weeping ash. Some few hardier blossoms still remained in the borders, and the turf under foot was smooth and trim. All things, indeed, about the garden, were very different, in their present state of order and careful tending, from its neglected luxuriance, and

desolate wildness, as Musgrave had last seen it. But it was not in its altered aspect that his eyes beheld it now. They took in little of the present, but were fixed on the details of many a far-distant day ; viewing that garden once more as it was of old. What to him was its neglect and desolation then ? to him, the joyous and hopeful youth, who, many a time and oft would pace its rough and untrimmed paths, his breast overflowing with those blissful dreams which have power to create a Paradise in the very wilderness ? Here, to this same walk, he had been wont to resort in the bright days of young love ; here, at sunset, in the gloaming, and by moonlight, to wander up and down, companioned by his ecstatic thoughts, his cloudless visions of the future. What to the lonely being, the last of his race, the blighted, disappointed, desolate man, were the garden's trimness, and its renovated beauty now ?

Revolving these mournful thoughts, he walked slowly on, till, raising his eyes as he approached the chair already mentioned, he became aware that there was a figure seated upon it; a female figure,—clothed, as it appeared in the fading light, in some long white drapery,—her face averted. A strange indescribable sensation darted through him, but still advancing, he was now quite close to the spot, when she slowly arose, and turned towards him. It was the countenance of Mary which met his eyes! how well remembered! that countenance, pale, calm, and mournful, yet unaltered in its loveliness. A smile—a sad sweet smile—upon her lips, which moved, though no sound came from them.

For an instant he remained rooted to the spot, his heart's pulsations standing still. Then he made a step forward, and as he did so, the form seemed to fade and vanish from his view. He reached the chair, and it was gone.

Walter Musgrave was one of the bravest of soldiers. He had never known what fear was; but now an emotion of a kind he had never before experienced, that awful instinctive feeling, the involuntary acknowledgment by our humanity of the neighbourhood of something not such as we—came over him, and nearly mastered his courage. For a brief space he remained, standing as if transfixed, where that form had met and faded from his sight, then hastily retracing his steps, hurried to the house, and stopped not till he had flung himself into a chair in his sitting-room.

Here he paused, and asked himself, what was it he had seen? Was it, as he could not but think most probable, nothing save the delusion of his own imagination, so intently fixed on that never-forgotten image, that but little stretch of fancy was requisite to call it up in a visible form from amid the darkness of the past? There above all,

where every old thought, that he had ever connected with her, seemed to start into awakened and more than ever vivid life, from amongst the scenes so inseparably associated with her; there, where he felt as if he had gone back years of life, and found his former self where he had left it so long ago, what could be more easily accounted for than such an embodiment of the ideas with which his whole mind was filled at the time? Thus did he reason, and, as he believed, fully explained the singular circumstance to himself; yet ever and anon, in the very depths of his spirit, felt rather than acknowledged, another solution would present itself; and he would ask, in shuddering awe, and in irrepressible anguish, was Mary dead?—had she ceased to be an inhabitant of this visible world, and was it her spirit which for one brief moment had been permitted to meet the eyes of him who had so devotedly loved her, to shew him that he was not for-

gotten in the unseen state on which she had entered? Vain and bootless enquiry, who was to answer it? He strove to dismiss the idea, and almost persuaded himself that he had done so; but henceforth, and for ever after, that garden walk, that seat beneath the weeping ash, became invested with a strange and solemn interest for him, and were beyond any other spots around the Hall, his most constant resort, in those hours of solitary musing, which became more and more habitual to him in his unaccompanied life.

CHAPTER VI.

"They are at rest :
We may not stir the heaven of their repose
By rude invoking voice, or prayer addrest,
In waywardness to those,
Who in the mountain grots of Eden lie,
And hear the fourfold river as it murmurs by.
They hear it sweep
In distance down the dark and savage vale ;
But they at rocky bed, or current deep,
Shall never more grow pale."

Lyra Apostolica.

THE shades of evening had fallen, on the same day which restored Walter Musgrave to his deserted home, over a modest dwelling in the outskirts of the town of —, in Scotland. To an apartment of this house, of small dimensions, and very plainly fitted up as a study, but crowded from floor to ceiling, with a large collection of books, of

no ordinary description; so little light was at any time admitted by the solitary window, that it was already quite dark within; but for an occasional gleam from a small fire, and the glimmer of a taper, placed upon a reading-desk in one corner of the room. Upon this desk lay a Prayer-book, open at the Eucharistic Office of the Church in Scotland; and before it knelt the owner of the apartment, a clergyman of that ancient church. He had just pronounced, in a low and fervent tone, the solemn words —“And we also bless Thy holy name for all Thy servants, who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labours,”* when a knock came to his door; and rising from his knees, he crossed the room to open it.

“I fear I have disturbed you,” said the person whom he admitted, “but my errand brooks no delay.”

* Prayer “for the whole state of Christ’s Church” in the Scottish Communion Office.

"I need not ask it," replied the clergyman. "She is departed?"

"She is. Gone—gone to her rest. It is not half-an-hour since."

"May God give her rest! Amen!" ejaculated the clergyman, folding his hands.

"Amen," answered the other speaker, a tall, slight young man, whose dress likewise indicated the clerical office; and who now sitting down by the table, covered his face with his hands. There was a few minutes' silence, broken at last by his loud, almost convulsive sobs.

"Be calm, my dear Graeme," said the elder clergyman, laying his hand upon the shoulder of the younger. "Endeavour to be calm. Try to realize the Communion of Saints. Think of her as perhaps nearer to those she loves even now, than while still beside them in the body; more truly near to them in love and prayer. We may not sorrow for her as those who have no hope."

“It is not often thus,” at last ejaculated the young man, struggling to regain his composure, “not often that I am so weak. But —. Nor dare I mourn for her,” he added, after another pause, “Not for her, released, as I hope and trust, for ever and ever from a heavy burden. But her child—her loving and beloved child!—so desolate—so utterly bereft!”

“It is,” replied the elder clergyman, “it is a sore bereavement. Man can do nothing in such a case—nothing—but commend her to the God of all consolation. And will not her mother’s prayers be offered for her still, now within, as hitherto without, the veil? The Holy Departed may be closer to us than we deem.”

“You will come with me, will you not?” asked Graeme, after a few minutes’ reverent silence. “I brought the old phaeton, but left it on the road a few paces from your door. I thought it would bring you more

speedily; and your presence will be a comfort to her."

"I will come, of course, instantly. You know that nothing but the summons to administer the Holy Communion to that other dying woman—that poor soul in the town here, would have induced me to leave her, two hours ago. I had but just come in from that solemn office, and was about to set off directly to Blair Ruthven, in hopes of seeing her once more in life."

"She sank," said Graeme, "very rapidly at last. But it was all peace."

"And Mary—Miss Ruthven?"

"She bore up to the last," replied the young man, "like an angel, as she is. The only time that her composure nearly gave way, was when her unfortunate Father's did. He was totally unmanned. But he allowed me to lead him from the room, and did not attempt to return again."

"And now," hesitatingly asked the

clergyman, "will he see me, do you think? Will it be of any avail?"

"No, no, I fear not," replied Graeme with a shudder. "It would be in vain to-night. I saw him before I left the house, and—no, he could not listen to you."

"Alas! alas! unhappy!" exclaimed the clergyman in a tone of grief and horror. "Can it be possible? By the very side of a death-bed! And of *her* death-bed!"

"She rests well!" said Graeme. "It is the living for whom our hearts must bleed. Yes, she was very calm. You were long alone with her this morning? She was at peace—was she not?"

"She was, I hope and believe. I was long alone with her, and that not for the first time. It is long since she sought the consolation provided by our Church, of unburdening her heart to me. I can think of her with great trust and comfort. And oh! amidst all that I am so often doomed to

meet with, of a contrary nature, the blessedness of dwelling on such a death-bed!"

"It is on a fitting day," observed Græme, as they rose to go, "the Feast of All Saints."

"The Feast of All Saints," repeated the clergyman. "Aye, and of all Penitents. Blessed be the name of the Redeemer!" Both reverently bowed their heads, then left the room together.

Six months had elapsed since Lady Ruthven's death; the dark days of winter had passed away, and the glow and loveliness of spring were once more abroad upon the world. It was a beautiful evening near the end of May, and the last rays of sunset were shedding additional softness on the tender green of the woods, which, within a mile of the picturesque old town of —, extended far and wide around the mansion of Blair Ruthven. From the narrow window of his study, Mr. Macdonald, the clergyman above introduced to our readers, commanded a view of

these woods, and of the turrets and gable-ends of the house, as it rose upon an eminence, far amongst their shades; and upon this object his eyes were at this moment intently fixed, as he sat by the open casement. An expression of profound sadness overspread his countenance, which, with his person, was in no other way remarkable than by its character of meditative calmness, and quiet self-possession—a certain impress of holy singleness of purpose stamped on all his words and actions, and an address distinguished by perfect simplicity, mildness, and courtesy. Nothing could be plainer, or more humble, than every accessory surrounding this Priest of the poorest Church on earth; nothing more retired and primitive than his mode of existence; yet he was a bright example of the refining, softening, exalting influences of a holy and self-denying life, a witness to the fact, that a good Christian is the truest specimen of a gentleman.

While he continued to sit, as we have described him, gazing on the beautiful prospect before him, yet not with a look as if he were contemplating its beauty, his study-door was opened by an old woman, the only other inmate of the house, ushering in the same young man who had brought him the tidings of Lady Ruthven's death, and who now, after a greeting marked by the same character of sadness which hung upon his own looks and words, drew in a chair by the window, and seated himself.

"I have left them," he said, "busy with their last preparations for to-morrow's journey; so I took leave for the night, and came here to spend an hour or two with you, Mr. Macdonald."

"You are very kind, Graeme, and I am truly happy to see you. You will take some tea, I daresay. I'll call old Eppie."

"No tea, thank you," replied the other. "Nothing at all. I know you have had tea,

and so had I, before I came out, with my cousin—our last meal but one under the old roof-tree. To-morrow we shall meet at an early breakfast, and I shall see them off. My mother has promised to meet Mary at Edinburgh. Every thing will be so new and strange to her! I wish I could have escorted her, but I have undertaken what is of more consequence, all the arrangements about the sale; all the miserable things that must be done, and which there seemed no one else to do."

"It was most fortunate, indeed," said Mr. Macdonald, "that you found yourself able to get away at present. Your cousin never stood more in need of help and comfort. But I suppose your absence cannot be long?"

"I fear not. I have got a friend to take my duty for the two next Sundays; and I may be able to manage a third—I will if I can. I would fain see her at Edinburgh, see her settled—if settled we may call it, where she is going."

“ It is arranged, I suppose, is it, Græme? (for I could not bear to put the question to Miss Ruthven to-day) that Sir Patrick goes at once to Holyrood? ”

“ It is. It was quite necessary. His person is not safe from his creditors; and there have been lodgings secured for them within the Sanctuary.”

“ Alas! alas! ” ejaculated the elder clergyman. “ And has it come to this? ”

“ Yes, to this—this woful ending! ” replied the other. “ To this it has come at last. Can one believe it possible, even now? ”

“ I cannot, who have been on the spot, and have watched the end coming, so long,” said Mr. Macdonald; “ so it is no wonder if you have difficulty in believing it, whose visits of late have been so few and far between. To me it feels like a dream. I cannot realize that those who have been so much in my thoughts, so much in my prayers, for years, are about to pass away for ever

from my path. I cannot believe that I have this day paid my *last* visit, my very *last*, to Blair Ruthven!"

"It was a sad one, that I well believe," said Græme.

"It was one," replied his companion, "whose pain will never leave my memory. Never did father love a daughter better than I have loved Mary Ruthven ; and to see her in her sorrow and desolation, kneeling for the last time to receive the blessing which I have so often called down upon her innocent head—to say farewell to the creature whom I have seen grow up like a flower from her infancy—to close an intercourse, and close it *thus*—which has been to me so full of comfort and affection! Many a long year has passed since I have felt a pang so keen as that with which I closed the door of that house behind me to-day."

Both were for some minutes silent; a silence at last broken by young Græme.

“ She—Mary—and I were a long while alone together this evening; and she spoke of her parting with you with many tears. But, she said, her sorrow for her mother was only an unrepining sense of her own unspeakable loss. She had never for one moment wished to recall her; and less now than ever; never remembered her at the altar since her departure, without blessing Him who had ‘ taken her from the miseries of this wretched world—from the body of death and all temptation.’ ”

“ Dear child !” said Mr. Macdonald. “ She is young to have learned so much of the meaning of that solemn thanksgiving, whose full significance grows upon us year by year as we miss one companion of our pilgrimage after another. But it is well—good—for those who bear the burden in their youth ! Yes, Mary’s is a stronger, firmer character by nature than her dear mother’s was; and yet, how beautifully, year by year of her

sad life, did strength become perfected in her weakness. But the last blow, the death of her son, she never did get over. And no wonder!"

"No wonder!" echoed Græme. A shuddering sigh escaped his lips, but neither he nor his friend said more. The death of Sir Patrick Ruthven's last surviving son, a young officer of dragoons, had taken place about a year previous to his mother's, at a distance from home; and the ineffable bitterness of the blow was not, could not, be tempered by such consolation as that to which Mr. Macdonald had alluded. Young Ruthven, a warm-hearted, but wild and reckless youth, who had inherited too much of his father's nature not to have caused his mother many a heartache, many a pang, for the son to whom all his sins and follies only served to draw her heart more closely, had died after a few days' illness, of an inflammatory attack, which there was too much reason to

suppose had been occasioned by intemperance. No time had been granted him for a late repentance, no time or consciousness for one prayer for mercy; and the heart which might have borne up under a bereavement softened by hope, gave way, and broke beneath the overwhelming burden of an anguish inconceivable save by those who have experienced it.

"It was a killing stroke," said Mr. Macdonald, at last. "And its worldly consequences, I fear, have been not less fatal."

"Yes," replied Græme, "while poor Hew lived, and could assist his father in raising money, which he never refused to do, even to the detriment of his own interests, Sir Patrick was able to keep afloat. Now, of course, under so strict an entail on male heirs, he has no more than a life interest in the property; and his affairs are in so desperate a condition, and he himself so incapable of managing them, that utter ruin is

staring him in the face. It is an appalling prospect."

More, much more, on the same subject, passed between the young clergyman and his friend, whose interest in the theme was not less than his own. And, as the evening gradually darkened, and the twilight fell, with its soothing calm, and its mysterious power of unlocking the deep fountains of the heart, and eliciting a fulness of confidential intercourse undreamt of in the broad light of day, the young man was led on to open his most private feelings to the sympathising listener beside him. He spoke of what, although not actually avowed, had long been matter of certainty to Mr. Macdonald—his own engagement to Miss Ruthven, his cousin in the second degree—and of its present hopelessness; dwelt upon the love he had borne her mother; and on the pleasant days of their early intercourse, their childish affection, growing with their growth, and

gradually deepening and intensifying into a more vivid sentiment, till it seemed entwined with both their lives ; entwined also it was, as the heart's most cherished feelings are wont to be, with the fair scenes to which both were now about to bid a long and last farewell.

“ There is not,” he said, “ a woodland walk, a tree, a stone almost, round about that house, not a room within it, that has not some memory of its own to recall. It is hard, hard to part with these! ‘ Here we have no continuing city’—I know, and I try to feel. We have each our appointed work to do; and she is—oh! how infinitely more self-devoted to her dreary task, than I to my Master’s service! Her filial piety, uncheered as it is now by love or companionship, and her patient fortitude, may well put me to shame; for He who reads all hearts best knows the sinful and faithless cleaving of mine to what He has

seen fit to remove, and its reluctance to the duties which I must go forth alone to discharge. But that the possession of her heart, though all else may be for ever denied, is a treasure well worth any amount of suffering, so deep is what I have of late endured in witnessing Mary's trials, and in feeling the power to soothe them forbidden me, that I have often felt tempted to envy you the calm and even tenor of your lot; and to long to exchange those keen emotions for its unruffled repose."

Had there been light to see it, a strange and unwonted expression, as of sudden pain, might at these words have been beheld upon the countenance of him to whom they were addressed. But although nought of this was visible through the dark, the tremulous accents in which they were answered was at once audible.

" My dear friend, such are the judgments passed upon us by our fellows. Did you

know all, Græme, you would discover that what you term unruffled repose had been purchased by pangs as keen, and bereavements more total than those under which you have my warm sympathy and my fervent prayers. *Haud 'ignarus' mali, miseris succurrere disco!* Nay, but how should you have known it?" he added, in answer to a hasty assurance of regret, and of sorrow for his words, on the part of his companion. "Regret! and why?—there needs none. I should not have said what I did, only that I have found it useful in cases of painful trial, to point out to the sufferer through what trials some others may have passed. Mine has been a different lot from yours, but it has had its own amount of bitterness."

" You were not then—you have not always been as I fancied," said Græme, " devoted to a single life?"

" I have not," was the reply. " Devoted

to the Church I was from my earliest childhood, devoted by the prayers of my mother, whose father, a humble clansman of Lochiel's, had died upon the scaffold at Carlisle; and who, as the wife of one of the suffering clergy of the Scottish Church, had no secular motive, none but her desire to honour God with all she had to give, to influence her dedication of me to His service. But although my youth was spent in poverty and privation, it was not unvisited by such dreams and hopes as render this earth perhaps too like a Paradise to be safe for some hearts."

"And you gave them up?"

"Not I gave them, but God took them from me. The early death of one whom I had loved as well, and loved as long, as you have done your cousin, just at the period when it was at last permitted us to indulge in anticipations of our union, was the Cross laid upon me in the inscrutable wisdom of

Him who saw that discipline was needed to win His servant to Himself."

"And you," exclaimed Græme, "took up this Cross, and I have dared to murmur at mine!"

"It is not easy, Græme—not to be done in our own strength, as you know, for any one to take up his Cross. But when we learn to bear the Cross, it comes ere long to bear us. We live to feel the blessedness of being enabled, in some measure, if not so entirely as we would desire, to conform our own will to the will of our Father. I do not say that mine was bent to His until after a hard struggle; but at last I saw the meaning of the trial, and endeavoured to obey the call to a life of disengagement from earthly ties, and of entire devotion to His service."

"And it was then you came here?" replied Græme. "I have so often heard our dear departed friend talk of her first acquaintance with you."

“ It was. The charge I had before was in _____; it was more lucrative; and I thought might be better bestowed on some one who had the ties which I no longer hoped for; besides that I was not sorry to get away from a large town, without feeling it inconsistent with my duty to do so. Our good Bishop recommended me to this congregation; and here I have now lived almost one and twenty years.”

“ Lived and laboured!” said the young man. “ It was a blessed day for them which brought you here.”

“ Oh! my dear friend,—it is a small thing to be judged of man’s judgment. How dare any one of us, who have the awful charge of souls, listen to such words as these, when we can look into our own hearts and lives, and know the short-comings there? How unmindful,” he added, after a few minutes’ pause, “ how unmindful we too often are of our blessings in counting up our trials!

The woful breaking-up at Blair-Ruthven has brought this reflection more forcibly to my mind of late. I feel that highly as I always prized that friendship and intercourse, I never knew or understood its full value till it was withdrawn for ever; and till, having laid that friend in the dust, I must now resign the comfort and the privilege of watching over her child."

"I believe—I too feel"—said Græme, "that we never do recognise the full value of a blessing till it is withdrawn. And I can imagine the pleasure and comfort, in so solitary a position, of an intimate friendship and companionship with Lady Ruthven. There was something in her so gentle, so sweet, so attaching; something that a man always felt asking for support and protection at his hands! And then her sad life—the long, long weeks—months sometimes—that she was left alone there;—the terror, and too often the unkindness to which she was

subjected when her unfortunate husband was at home ; her isolation from society, in consequence of his habits ; the death of her children ; the —. Oh ! how it wrings one's very heart to look back upon that woman's life and death."

" Nay," interposed Mr. Macdonald, in a faltering voice, " not upon her death, dear friend ; through that grave and gate of death she has passed, as we believe and trust, where all her tears are wiped away for ever. But her life was one that did indeed wring the heart of man to be obliged to contemplate, yet powerless to befriend."

" I am sure," returned Græme, " that she had no greater comfort (none half so great, except in her child) than in your friendship and pastoral counsel. She has often told me so."

" It is consoling to think so," said Mr. Macdonald, " for well may I rejoice to have been the means of comforting her, who

was a comfort—how much greater than she knew—to me. I came here in loneliness, in desolation of spirit. Resolved, as I was, by the grace of God, to do His work, and bear His fatherly chastening, yet human weakness shrank from the solitary path before me. But the contemplation of her trials, as much harder than my own, as the evils of man's inflicting are worse to bear than those of God's—the finding my counsel and prayers, as a priest, of value to one who stood in such need of both, and the growth of intimacy and confidence between us, gave me a new interest in life. And her child, that youngest and last surviving one, who was the first lamb of my flock at —, the first admitted by me into the Ark of the Church in Holy Baptism, twenty years ago this very month of May. How I have loved and watched over that child!"

"And the blessing your care of her has been to a creature who would otherwise have

been so nearly undirected! What does Mary not owe to your guidance of her mind?"

"It was no small happiness to have such a mind to guide. It has been a pleasant task, but it is over now, though its memory will not pass away. Had she been going in peace and happiness, the trial would have been less; but to part with her thus is indeed a painful struggle; and well may I feel with you, dear Græme, in what it must cost you, knowing what it costs myself. My prayers at least shall follow her, go where she may, and she has more prevailing prayers than mine to guard her."

It was late ere the two friends parted; late ere they closed a conversation so fraught with interest, and so full of sad, yet pleasing reminiscences; which a short period now must remove for both into the deep places of the heart, no more to be dwelt upon in words. At last, however, their farewell

was exchanged. Lewis Græme walked back for the last time to Blair-Ruthven through the green and bursting woods, beneath the soft dim light of the setting moon; and Mr. Macdonald returned from the door to which he had accompanied him; not to retire to rest, but, seated once more in his solitary study, to remain long absorbed in contemplation of Mary Ruthven's parting gift to him, a small copy of Pascal, which had been her mother's; and whose pages bore many marks, appended by her, to favorite passages; while on the fly-leaf these words were written in her daughter's hand:—

“ Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.”

CHAPTER VII.

“ I stand by the river where both of us stood,
And there is but one shadow to darken the flood;
And the path leading to it, where both used to pass,
Has the step but of one to take dew from the grass,—
One forlorn since that day.

I stand by the river—I think of the vow—
Oh! calm as the place is—vow-breaker! be thou!”

E. Barrett Browning.

IT was about six o'clock in the evening of a fine day in the beginning of August, two years after the date of our last chapter, and the declining sunbeams were shedding a warm radiance on the drawing-room of the Shaws Hotel at Gilsland Spa, where a large party was assembled. A young lady was beginning to discharge the duties of

making tea, at a table near the centre of the room, and an elder maiden at another; and various groups were dispersed about the apartment, or clustered near the open windows.

“ Warm evening, Ma’am;” said a respectable senior, a brewer from Carlisle, approaching the sofa where sat an expansive and comfortable-looking matron, the mamma of the more youthful tea-maker; “ Miss Emmar’s got heavy duty to do, such weather.”

“ She’s young and active, Mr. Goodlad, and always ‘appy to be of use,” smilingly responded the lady he addressed. “ ’Tis a pleasure to see the ‘ouse so full too, and quite reconciles one to making tea, when ‘tis for a nice party.”

“ Some new arrivals to-day, I think, Ma’am?” pursued Mr. Goodlad. “ You came to-day, Sir?” addressing a gentlemanly and somewhat foppish youth, who now

joined the party ; and whose black coat and white tie proclaimed him, what nothing in his air or manner would otherwise have indicated, a clergyman.

“ I did, Mr. Goodlad,” was the reply ; “ drove over in my dog-cart for a day or two. I must go back on Saturday, to be ready to discourse my parishioners next day ; but if I like the set here, I shall probably return. Nice place this ! more like a free-and-easy country-house than any thing else ! And one meets the same people year by year.”

“ Yes, Mr. Hardinge, as you observe, one does. ‘Tis a matter of thirty years now, I dare say, since Mrs. Goodlad and I began to visit Gilsland, regularly, once a year. Soon after our marriage, ma’am, you know,” with an appealing look to the matron on the sofa ; “ and,” smiling, “ we shan’t mention *how* many of those years, my good friend Mrs. Andrewes, and sometimes Mr. Andrewes,

when he could find time for a run up here, have met as regular as the month of August came round; or how many pretty young ladies we 've seen growing up about 'em."

"Coom, Mr. Goodlad," responded his friend, "whatever you say about the years of our acquaintance, you may mention *that* and welcome; I ain't ashamed of my eight girls, or my five boys neither."

"Nor have you any need to be, Mrs. Andrewes, at all events as respects the young ladies, if that be a specimen!" gallantly followed up Mr. Hardinge, glancing towards the fair tea-maker. "But I do not think that is the same Miss Andrewes whom I recollect meeting here last summer."

"No sir," replied the gratified mamma, "my daughter Lucy is at 'ome with her Pa. I've only another here besides Emmar, and you've not seen her before neither. She was never at Gilsland till this year."

"Just come out, eh? said Mr. Hardinge,

with a smiling glance at another and older gentleman who now drew near. "Not a bad place to come out at either." At this moment, the youngest Miss Andrewes approached and seated herself by her mother.

"This is she, sir. *Sarar* Anne, my dear, Mr. Hardinge. She's my youngest," pursued the matron, as the fair *Sarar* Anne, a pretty girl, smiled, and blushed, and resumed her seat, after curtseying to her new acquaintance; "and my three eldest are married; and my daughter Emily—"

But fortunately for the reader, he is not under the same civil necessity which constrained Mr. Hardinge to stand with a smile of apparent attention, while the good lady went into the farther and more recondite ramifications of her family tree. These were now interrupted by the opening of the drawing-room door, and the entrance of two young ladies, who appeared to have just returned from a walk.

“Pretty girls, Mr. Goodlad,” observed Mr. Hardinge, screwing his near-sighted glass into one eye, and fixing it upon the newcomers. “Pretty, eh? And just as well too, for there’s enough of them! More of the wood-nymph than the sylph! Rather a liberal allowance of waist and ankle, I confess, for my taste. Scotch girls, ain’t they?”

“Scotch, sir. Daughters of Mr. Jardine of—of—I never can remember them hard names, sir; but ’tis some place in Dumfries-shire. The family come here pretty regular every summer. Those are their Pa and Ma, that lady and gentleman by the farthest window.”

“They only arrived this morning,” observed Mrs. Andrewes.

“I remarked them at dinner,” said Mr. Hardinge; “but in the three years’ experience I have had of Gilsland, I have not chanced upon them before; and I think I

know almost every one else here just now. I thought I saw another arrival; a carriage drove up just before dinner. Who was that?"

"I think you must be mistaken, sir," replied Mrs. Andrewes; "there was no new arrival at dinner."

"Beg your pardon, ma'am," said Mr. Goodlad, "but there was an arrival, certainly; and I didn't hear the name; only Thomas said as the gentleman was late he meant to dine in his own private parlour."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Andrewes, with strong emotions of respect. "A private parlour too! Who can he be?"

"Not knowing, couldn't say, ma'am," responded Mr. Goodlad; "but we'll ask Thomas," looking round as that functionary, the head waiter, entered, followed by two attendant nymphs, laden with toast, teacakes, and other appliances of the evening meal.

"What a lot of prog!" ejaculated Mr.

Hardinge. "The people here do nothing but eat from morning to night—and at such outlandish hours, too. It is the great bore of this place. Well, Mr. Goodlad, what saith the oracle?"

"The—? I beg your pardon, sir," returned the literal man of malt, opening his round, good-humoured eyes.

"Your friend Thomas there—what says he of the new-comer?"

"Why he's something quite new, indeed, sir. Never been here before. A Nabob, ma'am—not long come from India!"

"A Nabob! Lor! That *is* a piece of news!" exclaimed Mrs. Andrewes, in a tone of high satisfaction. "What say you to that, Mrs. Goodlad?" as the worthy brewer's better half, a portly, comely dame, whose aspect bore the same stamp of good-humour, comfort, and enjoyment as her husband's, drew nigh and placed herself beside her friend.

And who may your Nabob be, Mr. Good-

lad?" enquired Mr. Selby, the gentleman who had last joined the group, a quiet, middle-aged Northumbrian squire.

"He's a Colonel Musgrave, sir, of Wansted Hall, in your county, and not very far from this, it seems."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the other. "Ah! and he's come here, is he?"

"What!" echoed Mr. Hardinge. "The Puseyite Colonel."

"The *what*, Mr. Hardinge?" "The *who*, Sir?" "What was it you called the gentleman?" respectively exclaimed, in tones of wondering enquiry, the two matrons and Mr. Goodlad.

Come, Parson, explain yourself," said Mr. Selby with a smile. "We must have your reasons for bestowing that cabalistic term on my old friend Musgrave."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Selby," laughingly replied the divine; "I didn't know he was a friend of yours"

One of theoldest friends I have," was the reply. "Or rather he was the intimate friend of my eldest brother, who has been many years dead, poor fellow ! But come—I must have an answer. You shan't get off. What is the meaning of that new word which I have only lately heard, and why do you apply it to Musgrave ?"

"The meaning of it, Mr. Selby? Why, 'tis a new term we've got up at Oxford lately; a name we give a certain set there, after one of their leaders; who ——"

"Methodists, Sir, ain't they?" enquired Mr. Goodlad.

"Methodists? Ha, ha! No; they're off on another tack altogether. I should like to see how Villars would look if he heard himself called a Methodist."

"Villars? You mean the Vicar of Wansted, do you ?" asked Mr. Selby.

"To be sure I do. He was presented to the living a couple of years ago, upon the

translation of the former Vicar to some place, I forget where, in Durham ; just a year after I came to mine. We are not ten miles apart, you know ; and besides, he's an Oxford man—not of my year ; but we've often met. He's a thorough-bred Puseyite ! wears a coat down to his heels—fasts and starves —wouldn't dine out on a Friday, or in Lent, to save his life ; has got up a daily morning service at his church there, which your friend the Colonel, Mr. Selby, and a few old wives, dutifully attend—talks big about restoring primitive discipline, and the ancient order of the Church—and, in short, the fellow's a regular monk."

" Doesn't visit about in society, I dare say, Sir ! " interposed Mrs. Goodlad ; for both worthy matrons were listening open-mouthed, with looks of wonder blent with horror, to a detail of enormities as completely new to their apprehension, as if they had not all been set forth for observance in that

old-fashioned volume yclept the Prayer-book of the Church of England.

“Visit? Oh! yes he does, I must say that for him. He dines out any where, on orthodox days ; and not a bad fellow neither, when you can catch him dismounted from his hobby. But these fellows make life all work and no play.”

“Bad plan that, Sir, very!” sagely observed Mr. Goodlad, shaking his head. “And fasting, did you say, Sir? Why, I never heard of such a thing. Did you, ma’am?”

“Never, in a Protestant country, Sir!” emphatically rejoined Mrs. Andrewes; who indubitably had no appearance of being addicted to fasts or vigils. “Downright Popery, Mr. Goodlad, in my opinion.”

“And shocking unwholesome! So bad for the digestion, ma’am!” added Mrs. Goodlad. “And where’s the use of it? What were good things given us for, if we

mayn't enjoy them?" With which consolatory apothegm, the comfortable lady helped herself to a cup of tea and huge portion of buttered cake, at that moment presented to her.

"But we are running away from Colonel Musgrave," said Mr. Selby. "So Mr. Villars has converted him; has he, Mr. Hardinge? He had always a proclivity that way, I should say, had Musgrave. But I am told he is a most active country gentleman; quite a marvel for an old Indian; and does so much good, they say? for we don't meet very often, being a good way from each other. I don't think I have seen him for ten months. I have been a long while in the south of late."

"I think you will find he has made a long stride since then, Mr. Selby. There's no standing still with these Tractarian fellows. They are always in a state of *progress*, as they call it. Yes; Villars and the

Colonel are sworn friends ; and take a world of trouble with the parish. They don't spare themselves, that must be owned. And he is an excellent old gentleman is Colonel Musgrave—no one can deny that ; a fine, open-handed, liberal old gentleman ! I should be sorry to say a word to the contrary, in spite of all his nonsense."

" *Old, my good Sir !*" repeated Mr. Selby. " The deuce is in you youngsters ! begging your pardon, Parson ! Why, you dub everybody old who is turned of thirty ! Wat Musgrave is only a couple of years my senior, and I should be rather sorry to write myself old, yet a-while. And a finer-looking man, in spite of India, ——"

" An Apollo, if you choose, Mr. Selby ! An Apollo in his grand climacteric, or near it, any how ! I beg ten thousand pardons ! I am unlucky in my topics to-night ; but I must say, if you keep your own counsel, nobody need ever guess that you and

Colonel Musgrave are within ten years of each other."

"Thank you, Mr. Hardinge. You are backing out of the scrape by a handsome speech. Certainly thirty-seven years of a hot climate do not tend to improve a man's looks; but I can tell you I should once have taken it as a high compliment to be compared to Musgrave. And I say he is a handsome man still, in spite of your jibes; and looks ten years younger than he did when he first came home. I am sure the ladies will agree with me as to his appearance when they see him."

"Those who admire mature beauty at least," said Mr. Hardinge, drawing up his elegant figure, and carelessly running a white hand through a mass of clustering dark curls, not innocent of Macassar and crisping-tongs.

"Pooh, pooh, my good sir. Most juveniles would stand a poor chance, I can tell you, with a man like that; not to speak of

the fine estate at his back. I assure you I have good reason to know that there were various speculations, in quarters of the county which shall be nameless, connected with Musgrave, when he first came home, but I take it they have all failed. I fancy he is a determined bachelor."

"Quite a convert to the 'holiness of celibacy,'" said Mr. Hardinge, with a smiling glance at Miss Sarar-Anne. "I am sure all young ladies are bound to cry down the up-holders of such a doctrine. What do you say to it, Miss Andrewes?"

"Thomas!" at this juncture exclaimed a lady from the opposite sofa, apostrophising the head waiter, who now again drew near, in the discharge of his multifarious tasks. "Thomas, are there no more buttered Johnny-cakes to be had? What is the meaning of it? You haven't given us half enough."

"I 'll send and see for more, ma'am," re-

plied Thomas, despatching one of his female myrmidons as he spoke.

“ Do, by all means,” rejoined the lady, “ we’ve not had near enough, these three nights back. It is too bad. I must complain to Mrs. Hudspeth else.”

“ Isn’t that the lady who eat so much beef-steak pudding, ma’am, at dinner?” confidentially whispered Mrs. Goodlad to Mrs. Andrewes.

“ Yes, ma’am; she’s very hearty, is that lady, Mrs. Donkin. You’d scarce believe how much she eats, and never misses a meal. She was here when the girls and I came. But they have been rather stingy of their famous Gilsland Johnny-cakes, so I must say she has done us all a service by complaining of it.”

The ceremonial of tea came to an end, and the usual arrangements of the evening followed. The regular whist tables were set out, and speedily occupied by the regular

parties from amongst the seniors, and the younger portion of the company crowded round the piano-forte, where one or two songs were tolerably, and only tolerably, performed by the Misses Jardine, Andrewes, and other young ladies. Then, after a little whispering and consulting of mammas, it was announced that, as there was such a large muster of young people, every one thought they could not do better than to adjourn to the ball room, and have a dance. To the ball room, a large apartment in the upper story of the house, they did accordingly adjourn. A fiddle was soon discovered amongst the motley denizens of the lower regions; and the inmates of the Stone Parlour, a class of visitors called from the name of the sitting room they occupied, who lived in the hotel at a lower rate of payment, were courteously invited to share the festivity, by a deputation of gentlemen from the drawing-room, and answered the summons.

A large party was thus congregated, and the Cumbrian Orpheus was ordered to strike up a country dance, which was led off by the debonair Mr. Hardinge, and one of "the pretty Scotch girls," whom he had selected as a partner, her waist and ankles notwithstanding; followed by Miss Emma Andrewes, and a mercantile youth, of infinite spirit and gaiety, from Newcastle.

The Shaws Hotel at Gilsland, in those days, ere the seclusion of that wild district had been invaded by the railway, which has now so totally altered its character, bore much less resemblance to a watering-place than, as our friend Mr. Hardinge had described it, to a free-and-easy country house. It was a place where, at certain seasons of the year, large parties, the members of which were almost all known to each other, were wont to assemble, to kill time by any devices they chose; all following their own pleasure, or uniting in various plans for amusement;

and meeting at table an incredible number of times in a day, at wonderfully early hours, to discuss very substantial fare. The male guest who had been longest in the house was wont to occupy the post of carver at the head of the table, and was styled Mr. President; while the last arrived gentleman discharged the duties of croupier, under the designation of *Mr. Vice* (-President being understood); and, as usual at public tables, in order to avoid disputes touching precedence, the seats of all parties were regulated by the dates of their respective arrivals.

Hither, then, on the day when we have again introduced our readers to the Spa, had Musgrave come once more; the first time for forty years, and almost at the very same season of the year that he had last, under such widely-different circumstances, visited its wooded glen. And while the party in the drawing-room were discussing what they were pleased to term his "Puseyism," our

hero, having finished dinner in the private parlour, of which such honourable mention had been made, was slowly pursuing his way down the winding walk which led towards the river, with sensations such as may be imagined in a departed spirit, permitted for a brief space to revisit the scene of his earthly joys and sorrows. He had not, until now, found courage to go back to Gilsland, a spot so indelibly connected in his memory with the last hours of his intercourse with Mary Charlton, and with their last parting. Of her he had heard no more, learned nothing farther, since that mysterious circumstance on the night of his arrival at Wansted, the recollection of which perpetually returned upon him with a strange thrill of awe and wonder. What it imported, if indeed it imported aught beyond the creation of fancy, the embodiment of his own thoughts at the time, he had never been able to discover. So long ago had

every trace of the Charlton family disappeared from the neighbourhood of Wansted, that no one was left alive who knew anything of them. In fact, with the exceptions of old Ibbotson, and one or two other octogenarians, the men and women of Musgrave's boyish days were in their graves, and their places supplied by the children, in some instances by the grandchildren, whom he had left at play beside their cottage doors. The returned exile stood in the midst of a new generation; and frequently did he start from a dream of the past, which had so vividly arrayed before him the vanished hours and associates of his youth, that, contrasting his inner with his outer man, he could almost have been inclined, at such times, to question his own identity. Such abiding memories of things gone by are in general more characteristic of women than men, in whom, when they do exist, they are stifled by the tyranny of custom, and the

din and tumult of the world. “C'est dans les cœurs des femmes qu' habitent les longs souvenirs.”

But Musgrave, as his own last letter had told Mary, had spent his life under circumstances whose tendency it is to intensify sensation in a mind of any feeling and reflection. Moreover, he had left his youth, with all its associations, behind him, in the country to which he now returned in advancing age; and these associations seemed to awaken at once from the slumber of years, and to stand before him in all the distinctness of reality, at this sudden striking of the long-unused “electric chain.” It fared with him as with the sleepers of ancient German tradition; when rising from their enchanted repose they re-appeared amongst their fellow-men to find themselves in an altered world; and bringing back with them the same thoughts, ideas, and emotions which had filled them when they went away,—started to discover

not only that all belonging to their early existence was changed, aged, withered, or perished from off the earth ; but that they themselves, most incredible alteration of all ! had become not less aged and withered than the rest. Never had these sensations made themselves so vividly felt as now, where from every bush, from every tree,—each leaf,—from every ripple of the unaltered water, where it flashed and bounded amongst the rocks, even as it had done *that* night, some memory seemed to spring—some picture of the past to unfold itself. Long did he stand by the river's side,—the current of his thoughts the while scarce less tumultuous than its rapid course. At last, however, that tumultuous current began to subside, to fall into the stiller flow now habitual to it; and Musgrave turned from the darkening glen, and with a slow sad step pursued his solitary path back to the hotel, and to the solitary chamber; which

the sounds of light-hearted merriment ringing from the upper story of the house, did not render him; in his present mood, at all more inclined to quit that evening. Such are life's unsuspected contrasts; and such the romance which at times lies hidden beneath the very feet of the least romantic or imaginative of human beings!

For a long time, long after the sounds of music and dancing had ceased, in conformity with the early hours of the house, our hero continued sitting by the open window of his apartment, and gazing out into the warm, sweet, summer night. The sky, when he first looked up to it, was obscured by many masses of heavy cloud, with here and there a faint and distant star beginning to appear in the dim azure depths between. But slowly, gradually, dispersed by some current of upper air unfelt below, those dark masses parted,—rolled off the face of the tranquil heavens,—till, when the late and waning

moon arose, it was to climb a sky of pure unsullied blue. The eyes of Musgrave followed her ascending course, and gazed into the unfathomable space beyond, his thoughts the while dwelling on the analogy thus suggested ;—the setting sun of earthly joy ;—the dim twilight of the bereaved and stricken heart, darkening and darkened by the lingering clouds of earthly passion ; the slow gradual clearing ; those vapours rolled away before the breath of Heaven—“the wind that bloweth where it listeth” ; till at last, in the purified vault above, rose, ever ascending higher and more bright, that softer, calmer, holier radiance, whose mild effulgence only served to lead the eye, no longer dazzled by the glare of day, farther and farther—deeper and deeper yet—into the illimitable immensity.

At that very hour, by the window of his solitary study, more than ever-solitary now, as was the heart of its inmate, sat Mr. Mac-

donald, the Scottish clergyman, gazing above the darkened woods of Blair-Ruthven, up to the same calm blue sky, and ascending moon ; his thoughts the while following a similar train to those of Musgrave. Different as were their outward positions, the sympathy between their spirits was very perfect, for by many different ways, does the All-directing Providence of God work out His own ends upon the human heart. The soldier, who had passed a life of warfare, amid constant change and strong excitement, had arrived at the same conclusion with the humble minister of God, the quiet tenor of whose days had flowed on in so lowly, so isolated, and so unvaried a channel. He, too, had learned the last, best lesson of life—to take up his appointed Cross. He, too, had recognised in the peculiar nature of his trials, the call to a state of disengagement from worldly things; of self-denial, devotion, and unwearied labour for the welfare of those com-

mitted to his charge. And none but the widowed in heart, the bankrupt in hope, the solitary—they who “weep sore in the night, and *their* tears are on their cheeks,” when no human eye beholds—none but they can tell the unutterable blessing, the soothing, sanctifying, elevating influence, diffusing itself over the saddest earthly existence—the light, ever brightest in the deepest darkness, emanating from the ordinances of the Church, and from a humble and reverent use of those appointed services and means of grace provided for her obedient children. There, too, the soldier and the priest alike had found their rest; at that hallowed fountain quenched the thirst, which not Abana nor Pharpar, nor all the fairest rivers of the earth, have ever had power to allay. “*O si sic omnes.*”

CHAPTER VIII.

Ha ! wie will ich dann dich höhnen !
Höhnen ? Gott bewahre mich !
Weinen will ich bitt 're Thränen,
Wienen, Minna ! über dich.

Schiller

THE appearance of Colonel Musgrave at the public dinner-table on the following day proved an immense relief to some of our last night's acquaintance, who had imbibed from Mr. Hardinge's discourse on the subject some vaguely-awful and mysterious ideas as to the nature and habits of the new species of individual termed a Puseyite; and began to be afraid that one characteristic of the tribe might prove exclusivism. They dreaded

lest the new arrival might confine himself to his own private parlour, and disdain to mingle with the other visitors at the Spa. But a load of ungratified curiosity was removed from all their minds by the entrance of the tall, erect, and, in spite of his white hair, still fine-looking, elderly man, who quietly assumed the part of *Mr. Vice*, as indicated to him by Thomas, and fulfilled its duties with much gentlemanly ease and urbanity; mingling in the conversation, and occasionally laughing at the jokes around him, like any moderate and rational human being who only went to church once a week. “The Puseyite Colonel” presently became quite a favourite with the whole party. Mr. Goodlad pronounced him “an uncommon sensible person, and quite the gentleman;” Miss Emma Andrewes and Miss Jeanie Jardine considered him “a most interesting man, and really now, not so very old-looking;” which latter opinion, however, was

combated by the two devoted admirers of Mr. Hardinge, Misses Lilly Jardine and Sarar Anne Andrewes.

The prudent mamma of the latter damsel meanwhile had many profound cogitations on the theme broached by Mr. Selby, namely, the wealth of his friend, and the probability of his being even now induced to enter into the married state; one result of which, on the good lady's part, was extreme regret at the absence, on a visit from home, of her daughter Emily, for whom she would otherwise have been strongly tempted to send. Emily was eight-and-twenty; she was considered handsome, and she enjoyed in Carlisle, her native city, the high reputation of being "serious,"—"quite an eminent professor," who belonged to the Tract Society and the Dorcas Society; was addicted to lecturing the poor; never read novels, nor indeed much of literature in any shape, except little books bound in grey or brown; would not

have attended a ball for the world; and could scarcely be prevailed on to remain in the room while a quadrille was being danced. In addition to these qualifications, Emily did not scruple to shake her head over the spiritual blindness of her parents, or to hint that she considered her sisters in any thing but a hopeful state. She could seldom be induced to go to the same church with the rest of her family, because, as she authoritatively announced, she did not feel satisfied with the "doctrine" preached there; and was much given to wandering after new and exciting preachers, as well as to little erratic excursions beyond the pale of the Church, in the shape of visits to Baptist, Methodist, and Independent meeting-houses, in which achievements she was wont to glory, as a species of emancipation from spiritual bondage. All these things considered, and the eminence of her daughter's position in the serious world duly weighed, as a coun-

terbalancing set-off against some little acrimony of temper, and no little self-conceit and spiritual pride, of whose disagreeable effects in the family-circle good Mrs. Andrewes was more secretly conscious, than cognizant of whose actual existence in such a shining character,—it appeared to her that Emily would be precisely the wife to suit a Puseyite, “who made such a to-do about going frequently to church.” And consequent upon this conclusion was a great amount of polite attention on her part to the said Puseyite, who would probably return to Gilsland again next summer, provided he found it agreeable now; in anticipation of which she resolved to leave no art untried to make Emily one of the companions of her next annual visit thither. This resolution, however, poor Mrs. Andrewes was forced, in her private mind, to qualify with the proviso, *if* Emily herself were so disposed! She was well aware that otherwise the attempt would

prove a failure, since among that gifted young lady's eminent qualities deference to the wishes of her parents or elders did not rank.

Pending these inward thoughts and outward demonstrations, the party at the Spa went on in the usual fashion of such places, waxing and waning. One or two elderly couples departed within the first three days, having fulfilled the customary fortnight of water drinking, and carried with them one of the prettiest young ladies. Mr. Hardinge took wing on the Saturday, in pursuance of his intention—"to discourse his parishioners,"—but having discharged this hebdomadal function, and finding that he did like the set assembled at the hotel, he reappeared amongst them on the following day; and by his return imparted new life to the bevy of maidens, whose spirits were still further raised by the presence of two gay Cantabs, taking Gilsland, for a few days on

their way to join a shooting party in the north;—not to speak of the Newcastle swain already mentioned.

Besides this reinforcement, there were some arrivals from the Scottish side of the border, amongst whom were two gentlemen, an elderly and a young one; and concerning the latter, some little difference of opinion arose in the drawing-room, when the ladies retired thither after dinner. The younger ones, gathering round a window, began to discuss these new comers. What were their names? had any body heard them? Yes; one young lady, whose place was near the foot of the table, had heard the elder addressed as Mr. Mercer, and the other as Mr. Græme. They had not come together, and were evidently quite surprised to meet each other at dinner. Mr. Græme was heard to say that he had got some one to do duty for him, and had come to Gilsland for a little rest, as he had been working very hard; where-

upon Mr. Mercer had smiled, and looked very significant; and all the young ladies wondered why. "Dear! and so Mr. Græme was a clergyman, too? There was no end of clergymen," they thought. "But he was a Scotchman? Then he must be a Scotch clergymen; and Miss Andrewes had always heard that there was a great difference between them and English clergymen."

"To be sure there was!" Miss Jardine indignantly exclaimed; "Scotch clergymen were Presbyterians; very different indeed from *these* clergymen. Who ever heard of a Scotch minister dancing, and actually waltzing, like that Mr. Hardinge?"

Here Miss Lilly Jardine coloured up, and averred that she "could see no harm in a minister dancing. And as for that Mr. Græme, he didn't look as if there was much dancing to be had out of him—a grave—plain looking—"

"Plain-looking !!!" Three young ladies,

in one breath, were “astonished to hear such an opinion from any one who had eyes! Plain, indeed—such an elegant, interesting young man! and he looked so sad, and they were so sorry for him!”

But just then Miss Sarar-Anne inquired of Miss Jardine, “Were any of the Presbyterians Puseyites?”

“Puseyites! no, truly;—Miss Jardine could assure her there were no Puseyites in the Scotch Church.”

This “word of fear,” *par parenthèse*, had been largely circulated, for the first time, at Gilsland, in consequence of Mr. Hardinge’s accusations of Musgrave, and the young ladies, one and all, were guiltless of attaching any definite meaning to it, further than that they concluded it to be something wrong and strange, and unlike other people. Miss Jardine’s fiat, however, settled the matter as to Mr. Græme.

“He can’t be a Scotch minister, then,” pro-

nounced the questioner, “for Mr. Hardinge recognised him at dinner, and told me he knew him by sight, and he was a Puseyite.”

The young ladies stared in horror.
“Another Puseyite?”

“Yes, there’s no doubt of it; for Mr. Hardinge says Mr. Græme is a Fellow of — College, at Oxford, and that they are all Puseyites there together.”

Poor Mr. Hardinge, whose fate it seemed to be to encounter Puseyites at every turn, now sauntered into the room, engaged, however, in amicable conversation with the accused, whom he brought up to join the party in the window, and be introduced to the young ladies there, who, with the exception of the offended Miss Lilly, did not long hesitate to concur in the verdict which pronounced Mr. Græme, though by no means regularly handsome, both elegant and interesting. He was a tall, slight, grave-looking young man, with a dark complexion, and

pale thoughtful countenance; which, however, was lighted up at times by a peculiarly pleasing smile, displaying a finely-formed mouth, and beautiful teeth. This pleasing smile, it must be confessed, occurred but rarely. His silence and abstraction, or melancholy—the young ladies could not decide which it was—were remarkable, and seemingly unconquerable. He did not dance, he did not even remain ten minutes in the ball-room, but was seen to leave the house while they were all dancing, and walk alone, up and down the garden, for an hour and more ; then, it was conjectured, go off somewhere else, for he did not come in—not for a long time after—when it was quite dark; nor did he appear at the supper table at all. In short, ere Mr. Græme had been twenty-four hours in the house, all the young ladies gave him up as hopeless. The Newcastle swain regained all his wonted ascendancy (as for Mr. Har-

dinge, *his* had never been for a moment shaken), and the approaching departure of the Cantabs, was more than ever regretted, since it was plainly perceived that the Fellow of —— College would be a poor substitute for them.

The elder Scotchman, Mr. Mercer, a frank, good-humoured, sensible man, having accompanied Colonel Musgrave, in the course of the following day, on a ride to Naworth Castle, it so happened that they encountered young Græme, walking, solitary and abstracted as usual, in the narrow lane near Burdoswald, and stopped to interchange a few words in passing.

“ May I ask, Græme—as I saw you had letters this morning—do your friends come to-morrow? ” inquired Mr. Mercer.

“ To-morrow? yes; ” replied the young man—a flush coming over his pale countenance. “ This was the day originally fixed, but something occurred to alter their plans.”

“ Ah ! well, I am glad of that, for I shall not be many days here, I find. I had a letter this morning which baulks me of half my stay at Gilsland, I regret to say. I must be gone the end of the week, or Monday next, at latest.”

“ I am very sorry to hear it,” replied Græme. “ It is so long since you and I have met, Mr. Mercer ; and it was such an unexpected pleasure to do so just now.”

“ It was, and I rejoice in it, I assure you ; the more so as I shall probably see your mother, on my return, and be able to tell her all about you. But I wish I could take her a better report of your looks, Græme. Are you well enough ? ”

“ Quite well, thank you. I never was better in my life,” replied the young man.

“ It may be so ; and it is no business of mine to contradict you,” said Mr. Mercer ; “ but, not to flatter, your looks belie you greatly if you are well. The change here

will do you good, I trust. The poor young fellow is like a ghost," added he, as the two gentlemen rode off together, and Græme pursued his way in the contrary direction.

" That young man's appearance interests me greatly," said Musgrave ; " and there is an expression of thought and sadness in his countenance unlike his age. Who is he, Mr. Mercer?"

" Poor Lewis Græme!" replied Mr. Mercer. " I am very sorry for him. He is the younger brother of a very good family; but like too many of our old Scotch names, with more ancient blood in their veins, than money in their purses. It is not above a year since his father died, greatly embarrassed. The elder brother is in India, and the estate at nurse, and his mother, a charming person, with three or four young sisters, are very slenderly provided for. This lad distinguished himself at Oxford, and has a Fellowship in —— College, and a very small

income from his curacy, which is all he has to trust to. They are an old Episcopalian stock the Græmes, and Jacobites and Non-jurors every mother's son of them, so long as such names were known in Scotland."

"And this young man's cure is in England?"

"It is, in ——shire. But it is a mere trifle. He could not live upon it; so that he cannot afford to give up his Fellowship; and thereby hangs a love-story."

"Ah! indeed!" exclaimed Musgrave, with a great accession of interest.

"Yes, poor fellow! A long attachment, engagement indeed, to a relation of his own—a second cousin. A sweeter, a better girl, never lived, neither; but she is poorer than himself. So until he can get a college living—and we all know how long such chances are of turning up when they are most required—the affair is a very hopeless one."

"Poor young man! I do most truly feel

for him," said the sympathising auditor, in whose mind any narrative of this kind was wont to arouse a host of recollections.

"So do I, from my soul," returned Mr. Mercer; "especially as knowing and greatly admiring the young lady. You will be able to judge for yourself to-morrow; for she is coming here along with some friends from Yorkshire. I had accidentally heard in Scotland that there was a chance of my meeting her at this place; so that, encountering Graeme on my arrival, I did not need to be a conjuror to guess what had brought him. They must be glad to snatch any opportunity of being together, for I think it must be upwards of a twelvemonth since they last met."

"I confess I feel quite curious to see her," said Musgrave. "I have not often been so powerfully attracted by any one as by Mr. Graeme. I should like to see the object of his attachment."

“I am sure you will admire his taste when you do. And then, if you have any curiosity to hear it, I shall tell you her story, which is a sad one. I wish I could have stayed longer here, to see how they get on. Her father and I were—”

At that moment the equestrians were hailed from behind; and Mr. Selby, galloping up, joined and rode on along with them. The conversation was thus diverted from its channel, to which it did not again return; and it so happened that on the same evening a letter from Mr. Villars, earnestly entreating him to be present at a meeting the following day, to consider a plan for repairing the Church of Wansted, induced Musgrave to make an early journey home for that purpose. He left, however, with the full intention of returning, which he accordingly did next day.

It was between one and two in the afternoon that our hero’s travelling carriage de-

posited him once more at the door of the Shaws Hotel ; nor was he, as he pursued his journey thither, unfrequently reminded of the time when the poor old Galloway had carried him to Haltwhistle, and his own swiftness of foot, and knowledge of the cross cuts amongst the hills had done the rest.

He found the hotel nearly emptied of its inmates, who, luncheon being over, had all gone out in different directions, with the exception of a couple of old gentlemen dozing over the newspapers in the drawing-room. The day was warm and beautiful, and Musgrave proceeded to follow their example. His mind full of those images of the past called up by his late reflections, he mechanically turned towards the glen, and slowly pursued the windings of the Well-walk, that beautiful wooded path whose bending trees had hidden Mary Charlton from his sight, at the conclusion of their last parting. He

passed the Well-house without meeting any one, save two of the poorer class of visitors to the Spa, who receive accommodation in the cottages around; and found himself at length by the river side, and close to the well-remembered ford.

As yet Musgrave had not crossed to the other side of the river, or re-visited the old trysting-place. More than once in the course of his walk he had gone out with the intention of doing so; but it had chanced that he had met other persons sauntering about the river side on all these occasions, and thus been prevented. It was, indeed, very rarely that the Well-walk, a favourite resort, was so completely deserted as on this day; and an irresistible impulse urged him to take advantage of the unusual circumstance, and bend his steps once more towards that spot. He crossed the ford accordingly, and turned into the footpath amongst the trees by the river, which led thither.

Suddenly, when within a few steps of the place, his progress was arrested by the sound of voices: that of a man, speaking in low, impassioned accents, to which the gentler tones of a female were presently heard in reply. It seemed as if some other pair of lovers had made a discovery of the birchen bower. A thought struck Musgrave; and cautiously putting aside an intervening branch, he was enabled to see, without himself becoming visible, that the identical mossy seat, where he last had met with Mary, was indeed occupied by another youth and maiden. The former sat with his back turned towards him; but in his figure it was easy to recognise young Græme, his head inclined towards his companion, one of whose hands he held clasped between his. She had her face partially turned away, and shadowed by a fall of rich, dark ringlets, for it appeared that the heat had induced her to take off her straw bonnet, which lay on the ground

at her feet. But almost at the same moment that Musgrave caught sight of the pair, she raised her head, shook back her redundant hair, and turned her face full upon Græme, with a sweet, but melancholy smile. And had a thunderbolt at that moment fallen at the feet of the unseen observer, he could scarce have let go the bough he held more instantaneously, or staggered back more completely overwhelmed, than he did at sight of that countenance.

After a minute's pause he again noiselessly put aside the branch; and again the same face was before him. She was speaking; and although he could not catch her words, yet fearful of overhearing what was intended for one ear alone, after a long, earnest, agonized gaze, he turned away, retreated by another of the well-remembered paths through the wood, and gained another sequestered nook, where he sat down beneath a tree.

And here he had time to question himself, in a species of bewilderment, whether the being he had just beheld were a living woman, or another phantom called up by his own fancy, while dreaming over the past? Well might he ask himself the question! for there, where he had last beheld her, there where his thoughts had just been picturing her form, as he had clasped her in that last embrace,—there had he again seen Mary Charlton!—Mary herself,—as pale, as sad, as on that unforgotten day, but beautiful as then; with her large dark eyes, and sweet infantine mouth, and her rich hair parting in its glossy curls on either side of a forehead white as alabaster. The form, the height, all were the same. Was it a vision? or was the past a vision? Had he dreamt of that day in the tent,—the burning noon-tide, with its breathless stillness sleeping on the camp,—the entrance of the Sepoy, the opening of the letter,—the blinding, diz-

zying, unutterable confusion of agony which followed? Had he dreamt of the deadly battle, in which his maddened spirit had sought a vent for its frenzy? Had he dreamt of mounting the breach in the wall of that proud Eastern city,—of losing consciousness amid the roar and tumult of that bloody fight,—of the long lingering weeks which followed,—of the years that came after them? And was it a dream that he was now sitting once more on the banks of the Irthing, aged before his time,—and mocked by the sight of her who had robbed him of youth and hope, blooming in her unfaded beauty, as if scarce a week had elapsed since they had parted? Long he remained, pondering these wild and incoherent thoughts; till at last the true solution of the mystery presented itself, and caused him a mournful smile at his own weakness. It must be the daughter of Mary whom he had just seen! Her husband was

a Scotchman, and her child, doubtless, the cousin to whom Lewis Græme was engaged.

“Poor youth!” he exclaimed, as he arose to pursue his homeward path. “*She* looked as innocent, as guileless; and yet she broke her faith with one as truly, as devotedly attached to her, as ever he can be to her child. And they too have been guided to that fatal bower! And there they sit, all unconscious of the story, that if lifeless things had speech, those trees could tell them! Will that poor fellow ever seek it alone hereafter, in a desolate old age like mine?”

Musgrave returned to the hotel, his mind absorbed in what he had just seen, and in the strangely-agitating anticipation of meeting, in that place too, with the daughter of Mary Charlton. On questioning his servant, when he came to assist him in dressing for dinner, as to the new arrivals during their absence, he learnt that late on the previous day there had been one, a party from

Yorkshire, consisting of a Mrs. Clarkson and a Miss Milsom, accompanied by another young lady, "with a queer Scotch name," which nobody in the hotel could make out. This lady he at once conjectured to be she whom he had seen with Græme; and so intently were his thoughts occupied on the subject, that, although in general as punctual as military men usually are, he found himself on this day too late for dinner; and that the whole party was seated at table ere he entered and took his place.

The law which regulated these matters assigned our hero a post near the upper end of the long dinner-table, and on a different side to the new party, who were farther down, and opposite to whom was Mr. Græme. But as they fronted the light, they were distinctly visible to Musgrave as to him; and strange would have been the sight—had any occult art laid bare the breasts of these two men,—to behold the tumultuous strife of

feelings so much alike, and yet so widely different, veiled under the calm and untroubled exterior of both. Both seized every unnoticed opportunity of scanning the countenance of the beautiful girl who fronted them, placed as she was on the right side of Mrs. Clarkson, a fat, comely, and comfortable-looking elderly matron, somewhat of the Mrs. Andrewes and Mrs. Goodlad type, but with a larger dash of self-complacency than either, and rather less of *bonnefemme*, if we may be allowed to create a feminine for the untranslateable word *bonhomme*, than distinguished the former worthy dames.

Now that Musgrave viewed this young lady, apart from the scene where she had first arisen before him, like a phantom of the loved and lost, he had time at once to note her striking resemblance to Mary Charlton, and to observe that in some respects there was a great dissimilarity. The features were the same, but their expression

was different. There was the same character of sweetness, but more energy in the lower part of the face, and a higher tone of thought in the upper. And the large dark lustrous eyes were hers in form and hue and melting tenderness; but no such cloud of sadness, when he last saw Mary, had ever shaded hers, as that which imparted such a mournful depth to the eyes now before him. Her whole aspect and demeanour had a subdued and saddened air, as if of one prematurely acquainted with trial; and this impression was still further confirmed by her dress, which was slight mourning of the plainest and simplest description; yet withal full of the same character of quiet elegance which marked her every movement, and rendered her a striking contrast to her two companions.

The younger of these, Miss Milsom, was apparently somewhere about twenty-five; small, slight, and insignificant of person, rather pretty than otherwise, very much

over-dressed, and thoroughly provincial. To the appearance of the chaperon of the party we have already alluded, and in it there was indubitably nothing either romantic or interesting; yet the eyes of Musgrave, whenever they quitted her young and lovely companion, returned again and again, as by a species of fascination, to gaze upon her face. It perplexed and baffled him with a resemblance to some one which he had seen, he could not recall where; one of those tormenting likenesses that haunt us like a half-forgotten dream; and the oftener he looked, the more it grew upon him. Suddenly, like an electric flash, some movement, some tone of voice, or look awakening slumbering recollections, revealed to him the mystery. The person on whom he was gazing was, or rather had been, Bessy Charlton, the elder sister of Mary! Yet when he last beheld her, she had been a fine-looking young woman; never particularly refined, it is true, in

person or in manners; always loud and self-sufficient; yet certainly of a superior stamp, so far as appearances went, to the full-blown, full-dressed, amply-developed matron, in her rich rustling robe of lavender-coloured satin, bright crimson scarf, profusion of blonde frills, and marvellously elevated and expanded cap,—out-heroding the fashion of the day; and with its affluence of white flowers, lavender coloured bows and pendant streamers of ribbon, imparting additional breadth to a face already largely provided in that respect; as well as enhancing by force of contrast the florid colour, which so plainly bespoke an existence spent in the full enjoyment of life's comforts, and freedom from its heavier cares.

“Wonderful!” said Musgrave to himself, as the identity of Mrs. Clarkson with Bessy Charlton forced itself still more clearly upon him. “Could one have imagined it possible that that handsome girl would alter so completely?”

He spoke without consideration of the strangely deteriorating effects, alike upon the mind, and upon the body, which is the mind's exponent, of what the poet terms a "lower life," a life in which the higher faculties and deeper feelings of the soul are never called into play—in which, without falling into any positive harm, often very much the reverse, the whole tone of thought and action is common, worldly, and superficial; overlaid, moreover, with systematic indulgence in ease and good living; a life "full of bread"—full of all that can minister to the luxury of the material part, and taking the well-being of the immaterial and imperishable as a matter of course. It is not age—not the silvering of the sunny hair—the dimming of the bright eye—the wrinkling of the smooth cheek—the departure of elasticity from the step and form—it is not these that most grievously alter and mar the beauty once delightful to the eye.

The soul's beauty, the loveliness of expression, the stamp of a pure and elevated mind, often long survive the loss of youth, with all its sweet and unpurchaseable graces. But the spirit, clogged and fettered by the things of time and sense, with pinions long unused, if they ever were used, to soar—the mind dwarfed and warped by mean, and vulgar, and secular interests, and by selfishness, which in advancing age advances, if unresisted, with fearfully rapid strides—these are the true foes of beauty; these, and the indulgence of evil tempers, are the too frequent causes of the incredible change which is sometimes seen to have come over the fairest human faces.

All unconscious the while of the presence not less than the observations of him, towards whom, as the lover of her sister, she had in former days acted so unfriendly a part, Mrs. Clarkson made herself particularly comfortable during the repast, and did

ample justice to the good cheer; conversing all the time with the elder of her two companions, on subjects which appeared to excite much merriment in both, not of the most subdued cast. They talked, as Musgrave did not fail to remark, much more to each other than to their beautiful companion. Her, however, they did occasionally honour with a few observations, to which her answers were returned in a low, sweet voice, every tone of which, when audible in an occasional pause of the din around, thrilled the hearts of two eager listeners—the one with the magical influence of love, the other with the scarce less potent spell of memory.

“Now, Mr. Mercer,” said Musgrave, drawing that gentleman into a window, as the retreat of all the others left them alone in the dining-room, “you promised, you remember, to tell me the history of that very lovely girl, Miss—Miss—?”

“Ruthven—Mary Ruthven,” replied the

other, in a quiet tone; little guessing the feelings awakened by his answer, in a hearer apparently as quiet as himself.

“*Mary!*—her name too is *Mary!*” was Musgrave’s internal exclamation.

“Well, my dear sir,” pursued Mr. Mercer, “that is easily done. Is she not a pretty creature now? There are one or two very lovely pink and white faces amongst your north country belles here at present, certainly; there’s that little girl Andrewes, and Miss Letitia, or Juliana, or something, Morris, in particular; but I must say I felt proud of my own fair countrywoman amongst them all! And yet, if the truth were known, her beauty came from the English side of the house. Her father was a very handsome man, but she is not like him at all. Her mother was English. Should you ever have guessed her to be the niece of that fat, vulgar woman she is with?”

“They are not much alike, certainly.”

“Alike! Why, I never saw any of her mother’s family before, and, upon my soul, I could hardly believe my eyes and ears when Mary introduced me to her Aunt this morning. Her mother, poor thing, was such a very different looking creature. Well, she is at rest from her troubles, and they were not a few.”

“Dead?” said Musgrave, in a low voice.

“Dead these two years and more. Died of a broken heart, I believe, if ever woman died of one.”

“Can you tell me,” asked Musgrave, who had turned round to the dinner table, and, after pouring out and swallowing a large glass of water, now came back to the open window, on the ledge of which he stood leaning, having his face averted from the narrator. “Can you tell me—? Don’t you think this room is very close?” he added, interrupting himself.”

“It is insufferably close,” replied Mr.

Mercer; "I 'll open another window. What were you going to ask me, sir?" he enquired, on returning, after effecting this purpose, to that where his companion had remained standing.

"The period at which Lady Ruthven died?" replied Musgrave, making a strong effort over himself. "Do you know at what time of the year it was? The name recalls to me that I was well acquainted, at one time, with some of her connexions, and I should like to know some particulars of—of her fate."

"Really! Were you? It is odd how one comes upon people in the most unexpected ways. As to the period of her death, poor soul, I happen to know that to a day, from some circumstances with which I need not trouble you. I was in —shire at the time, and in the near neighbourhood. She died on the first of November, 1829—All-Hallow day, as we call it in Scotland."

“*The Feast of All-Saints!*” ejaculated Musgrave, in a low shuddering tone.

“The same,” quietly rejoined Mr. Mercer, all unconscious of the meaning which the date conveyed to his companion. “I attended her funeral; with a heavy heart I may well say, for her husband and I were old cronies, and there was something in it altogether so melancholy. It was a sad scene. Well do I remember that lad Lewis Græme’s distress; he had been a great deal at Blair Ruthven, and she was very fond of him, quite like a second mother, he always said. He could scarce command himself during the reading of the Burial Service, and I won’t say that there were not some others nearly as bad. She was a beautiful creature,” continued the worthy speaker, in a musing tone; “a most lovely woman at the time of her marriage. As much like her daughter as you ever saw one face like another. And, by the way, it is an old story now—a very

old story—but I believe—yes, I am almost certain—that the match was made up at this very place!"

"*Here!*" exclaimed Musgrave. "*Here!* Lady Ruthven's match made up at *Gilsland*?"

"I am pretty sure it was. And not unlikely, you see; for she belonged to the North of England, I fancy, and Sir Patrick Ruthven had friends in Cumberland, and was often about those parts, and fond of a frolic, so this was a very likely place for him to come to by the way. Yes, it was here that he met and fell in love with her, and, between you and me, with her fortune; for her father was in trade, and, at that time, reported a very wealthy man, though he afterwards failed. Sir Pat was confoundedly dipped, even then, though the fact was not generally known. Things looked very prosperous at first. But she was a miserable woman, sir, if ever one lived."

Mr. Mercer then went on to detail many particulars of Lady Ruthven's trials with which the reader is already acquainted; and to describe the downward career of her unhappy and profligate husband; and told how, as his affairs became more embarrassed, and debt accumulated upon debt, his recklessness and self-indulgence went on deepening into habitual intemperance; with its usual concomitants, violence and uncertainty of temper. He added that after the ruin of her father, the ill-fated wife had lost any influence which she had hitherto possessed over her husband; for as the principal of her fortune had not been paid up, it was involved in the loss of his; and the enforced cessation of the handsome allowance he had hitherto made her was a severe blow in the state of Sir Patrick's finances. It became known, by means of the gossip of servants, that Lady Ruthven had from that time been subjected to rude and violent reproaches on

account of her father's misfortunes, whenever her husband's temper was excited by the indulgence of his fatal propensities; and had been taunted, on many occasions, with her plebeian origin and want of connexions. To all these and many other sufferings, of whose nature and extent no one but herself was in all probability aware, were added the deaths of three children in infancy; and long after, the crowning blow already mentioned—the loss of her only surviving son. Mary, the youngest, by a long interval, of all her family, was thus the only one left; at once an unspeakable consolation and a source of acute anxiety to the mother, who felt herself sinking into the grave, and about to leave that tender blossom unprotected to the mercy of a cold world. But when the stroke fell, and the young girl found herself motherless at the very age when the extent of that irremediable loss is most keenly felt, it was beautiful, Mr. Mercer added, to see

the fruits in the daughter of the good seed sown by the mother in tears and patient endurance. From the hour of her death, Mary had devoted herself, with all the quiet energy of a single-hearted nature, to the fulfilment of her mother's unfinished task; and had given her whole time, thoughts, and cares to her unhappy father. He, seized when too late with unavailing remorse, unavailing because powerless over an enslaved will and a nature steeped in the very mire of sensuality, soon after sank into a hopeless state of health, and dying a year previous to the present time, had left her a destitute orphan.

“The estate,” continued the narrator, “was entailed on heirs-male, and passed with the title, to a very distant relation; and Sir Patrick’s whole personal property was seized some time before his death, by his creditors. He died, sir, in the Debtor’s Sanctuary at Holyrood. And I can only say, that the

sight of that man, as I used to see him before his death, would have been worth a thousand sermons to any young fellow in danger of running a similar career. To look at that miserable, palsied object, and to remember him, as I did, one of the finest men you should have seen! Well, well! the longer one lives, the more clearly one perceives that there is retribution even on this 'side the grave.'

"And this poor dear girl," enquired Musgrave, after a few minutes' pause on both sides, "has been left dependant on her mother's family?"

"She has; for beyond the pittance of five hundred pounds, with which our law burdens an entailed property in Scotland, as provision for each younger child, she has not a penny. And as to her home, she had no choice there, for not one amongst her high connexions offered her a shelter. Sir Patrick, having been an only child, had no

very near relations; and all he had were a good deal estranged from him, in consequence of his way of life; it was a convenient pretext to get off by. I ought to except Mrs. Græme, who would have been only too happy to offer his daughter a home, and did do so, in fact."

"The mother of young Mr. Græme."

"Just so. She was left a widow not long before Sir Patrick's death, and retired to a small place in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. My wife had the whole story from her. She loves Mary as her own daughter, and would gladly have kept her as such, but this Mrs. Clarkson, who is the widow of a rich wool-stapler near Huddersfield, and has no children of her own, wrote, earnestly pressing her niece to come to her. So poor Mary, in her own clear-minded, unselfish way, thought it was her duty to accept the invitation; for Mrs. Græme and her family have very little to live upon, and she had

no means of staying with them on independent terms, and could not bear to be a burden to them."

"It was very admirable!" exclaimed Musgrave. "The sacrifice could be no light one."

"No, that it could not. I had no idea what it was till I saw the people. Poor Mary Ruthven, with her cultivated mind (for you would not believe, under so many disadvantages, how much that creature has done for herself) must, indeed, be sadly out of her element amongst them; not to speak of the comfort it would have been to live with Lewis Græme's family. *That* is a sad weary waiting, too. But I can tell you, sir, that were I a young man, and had the wealth of a kingdom at my back, I should be proud to ask that girl to share it. I have had ample opportunities of judging of her character, for I used often to go and see her poor father, to whom too many of his old acquain-

tances showed the cold shoulder in his last days. She is a jewel of the first water, take my word for it."

" You must introduce me to Miss Ruthven," said Musgrave, as they rose to repair to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER IX.

MARGARET.—“Old times should never be forgotten, John.
I came to talk about them with my friend.”

Charles Lamb.

WHILE the above conversation proceeded in the dining-room, an ample flow of confidential communication was taking place in the drawing-room, between Mrs. Clarkson and Mrs. Andrewes, who had that evening recognised each other as old Gilsland acquaintances, though many years had passed since their last meeting; but who had not till now found opportunity for “a regular good talk.”

“Lor, ma’am!” ejaculated the latter matron, having concluded an elaborate

history of herself, her husband, and family, “I declare I ain’t got the better of my surprise yet! It’s given me quite a turn. Of all people, who’d have thought of my meeting with Bessy Charlton here, to be sure? It must be a long spell since you’ve been in Coomberland?”

“Not yesterday, indeed, ma’am,” replied her friend. “I have been long planning a visit to Gilsland, where we passed so many happy days long ago; but somehow I never could contrive to make it out till now; and it does seem so strange to be here again.”

“No doubt it does, ma’am,” quoth Mrs. Andrewes in a tone of fat and comfortable sympathy. “One sees a great change in course of years.”

“Yes, they are altered days since we were last here,” pursued Mrs. Clarkson. “After poor Pa’s misfortunes, you know, ma’am, we had no more connexion with this county. He and my youngest brother and

sister removed to Yorkshire, when Wansted Grange was sold, in order to be near me and my sister Jane, Hetta Milsom's mother, you know. Poor Pa' never held up his head after. Well, well, 'tis no good dwelling on these old sad stories. I say life's too short for fretting, ma'am."

"And a very good saying, ma'am. My own words to my daughter Mouncey, when she lost her little boy last year,—a sweet little fellow! But she was in such a way! I thought she'd have followed him; and I said to her at last, 'Barbara, my dear, you should try to take things calmly. Life's too short for fretting!' And, well, ma'am, your sister Lydia, she was a 'andsome girl, and so dashing! What became of her, may I ask?"

"She married not long after poor Pa's death, ma'am—married very well indeed. Her husband, Dr. Askew, was a very gay young man, surgeon to the —— Dragoons,

who were quartered at Leeds then, and she met him when she was visiting Jane. But his father was rich—they're Manchester people—and came down handsomely; and he left the army after a time, and settled at Wakefield. I assure you they keep their carriage, and riding horses, and live in very good style. We have great reason to be thankful, after all our losses, that things turned out so comfortably. My good husband, ma'am, did a great *dooty* by my family. My brothers are all well to pass too. Poor Mary was the only unlucky one amongst us.

And thereupon, in the plenitude of that singular degree of communicativeness observable amongst Englishwomen of her class, the good lady proceeded to impart to her auditor a lengthened history of Lady Ruthven's unhappy wedded life; including, of course, many particulars which had been better untold, and which were listened to

with sundry ejaculations of horror ; and winding up with honourable mention of the "proud Scotch cousins," who had as good as cast off her orphan daughter, and were likely to leave her a burden upon her mother's kindred.

"Not but what she's a sweet girl, and a pretty one, ma'am," she added, "though many people think that she is not to be compared to Hetta Milsom."

"To be sure, no more she isn't, ma'am!" interposed Mrs. Andrewes, whose own daughters were more in Miss Milsom's style than Miss Ruthven's.

"Well, ma'am, it is a matter of taste. Hetta has not her beaux to seek, that is certain, and she need not have been Hetta Milsom to-day if she had been easily pleased. But she will have a little something comfortable of her own, and has some right to be fastidious."

"No doubt, ma'am, no doubt. That

alters the case very much ; as I said to my daughter Joliffe, when young, Mr. Salkeld proposed to her. My dear, I said, take my advice. Your papa can provide very 'andsomely for you ; don't be too easily pleased. And she has some cause now to thank me for it. My girls have doon very well, all of them as yet, very well indeed."

" And so have my nieces, ma'am, Hetta's elder sisters, and my brother Charles's girls. And since Hetta came to live with me, (four years ago, when I lost Mr. Clarkson, and went to stop at Knutsbro', I asked Jane to spare her to me), I assure you she's been much run after. But Mary is a good deal admired too, and between you and me and the post, she had a very good offer two or three months back, which it would have been a great matter for all of us if she had accepted ; she having nothing, and I so many claims on what my good Mr. Clarkson left me. But if Mary brought nothing else from

Scotland, she brought a tolerable stock of Scotch pride ; and besides that, I am sorry to say——”

“Aunt,” said Miss Milsom, interrupting the conversation at this juncture, by approaching the elder conclave, “have you any idear where Mary is ?”

“Yes, my dear,” replied her aunt, “she asked leave to go for a walk with her cousin, Mr. Gra-ham.”

“Mr. Gra-ham ?” replied the fair Hetta in an interrogative tone.

“Yes, my dear,” Mr. Gra-ham, you know, Hetta ;” a telegraphic pantomime of nods and signs eked out what the speaker left unsaid. “You remember what I told you ? —that tall, thin, young man whom Mary introduced to me last night when we arrived. She walked with him to-day, too.”

“Oh ! that is Mr. Gra-ham, the Scotch cousin, is he ?” returned the young lady with a scornful toss of her head. “I thought

they seemed wonderfully 'appy to meet last night, and I meant to *hask* 'is name then, but forgot. She is monstrous fond of walking, is Mary, that must be owned."

Miss Milsom went back to the group of young ladies whom she had left; and Mrs. Clarkson, in return for the information volunteered her by Mrs. Andrewes, of Mr. *Graham's* "queer reserved ways," and his being "a Puseyist," poured into the ears of that lady, a narrative of "the love affair" between him and her niece, and her own annoyance and vexation thereat. To the fact of an engagement subsisting between them, of which Mary had informed her, the prudent aunt did not advert. She had no faith in the possible duration of engagements, when wordly means were not forthcoming; and was determined that it should not be her fault if Mary continued to reject good and substantial offers for the sake of a poor curate. She therefore judged it wisest to say nothing of such a compact.

The lover-cousins, meanwhile, were sauntering, arm-in-arm, along one of the many sweet and secluded lanes in the neighbourhood of Gilsland Spa, their hearts, in spite of past and present sorrow and anxiety, filled with the sweet sense of repose in each other's presence, which is one of the characteristics of love, and which shuts out retrospection for the time being, equally with anticipation. The summer evening air around them, so full of balm and blessing,—the green trees and wayside flowers, had carried back their memories to the long-departed days of their early love, and to a fairer scene than that whose beauty they were now enjoying; and they were dwelling on the events of those days in a dreamy trance of forgetfulness of the gulph of woe which lay between.

“Do you remember, Lewis,” said Mary, “the day when we set off to climb to the top of Ben-na-bourd?”

“With Allan Menzies for a guide?”

answered Lewis. “ How well I recollect it! I see the scene now! The beautiful blue September morning, with the mists tracking the course of the river; the bright sunshine through the open windows of the breakfast-room; your dear mother making tea, and urging us not to delay starting. I could fancy I saw Allan’s figure, coming round with your little sheltie to the door; and your mother standing by to see you mount, and giving me a thousand injunctions to take care of you.”

“ And how carefully you led old Donald up the rough glen, Lewis! And then the pleasure of dismounting, when the hill became too steep to ride! leaving him at the shieling, and plunging knee-deep into the flowering heather! the triumph of reaching the top at last—the glorious panorama that lay beneath us! how often it rises before me now! I have never forgotten that day.”

“ How could one forget it ? ” exclaimed Græme. “ And not the least pleasant part of it was the home-coming ; the slow, quiet walk through the woods, all golden-green in the light of the setting sun ; the pause for a few minutes—do you remember?—on the old stone bridge, to listen to the sweet dash and ripple of the burn amongst the rocks and pebbles below ? What music there always was in the sound of that burn ! ”

“ Always ! ” said Mary. “ It had a voice of its own ; I should know it amongst the music of a thousand streams. I could fancy I heard it now ! And while we stood there, Lewis, Mr. Macdonald came up along the avenue. He had been visiting mamma. We were so glad that she had not been left all day alone ; and the pleasant talk we had, you recollect ? you and he leaning on the stone parapet of the bridge, and I sitting on old Donald, while we sent Allan on before to say that we were coming. And mamma’s

dear face watching for us at the window of her little sitting-room! And the evening! —those happy evenings!"

"Those happy evenings!" echoed Græme. "When you and she sat working while I read to you; or when we sang together, Mary! Those evenings stand out in the distance like stars here and there in a dark night."

"Dark enough it often was!" said Mary, with a sigh. "But oh! when one looks back *now*, Lewis, what breaks there were in the heavy clouds—what gleams of pleasure! Some few days we have to think of that were worth years in themselves. That day is one. And the last time that poor, poor Hew was at home! He was always kind; and mamma—dear mamma!—the comfort it gave her to have him! The—"

Mary paused abruptly; and Græme pressed her arm more closely to him, and clasped her hand in his.

“And any time that you were with us, Lewis,” pursued she, after a few minutes’ silence, “was always happy—always a comfort at least, if happiness there could not be.”

“What would I not give,” exclaimed Græme, “for almost the saddest of our periods of union now? The privilege of being your help, and, so far as I could, your comforter, my darling!—the hours of confidential intercourse—the quiet—the seclusion—no prying eyes or malicious tongues beside us!”

“Aye, even to the twilight walks in the dark lime-tree avenue, Lewis, ‘walking and weeping!’ Even these—even the last, darkest, saddest days of all—those days when all was bright, all bursting into life and beauty around us, and sorrow and desolation settling more hopelessly day by day on our ruined home—even those days I recall now with such fond, sad associations! We

were together then ; we had good, dear Mr. Macdonald within reach ; the grief we felt had so many holy, softening elements infused into it ! so different from the hard, bitter sorrows that followed."

"I can hardly trust myself," said Græme, "at times, to dwell on those days, and contrast them with the present. And you, my Mary, went through a fiery ordeal after that, all alone in that cold-hearted town."

"Except for that kind Mr. Mercer and your dear mother, Lewis ; and her I could see very seldom. But we will not dwell on *that* just now, when we have met for so short a space ; not to-night, at least. I seldom dare—I want courage to—I dread—to think over those dark days at Holyrood. That was a species of trial to which tears gave no relief. But how often I have found it a comfort to weep away the leaden weight upon my heart, when I had time—when I

could be alone—by calling to mind the last days of mamma's life—the last at Blair Ruthven! It was a comfort even when I could not shed tears, to remember how I had wept then."

"I can understand it, dearest," said Græme. "I cannot weep, like you; but I, too, know the comfort, the rest, of turning for a little space from the wear and tear of worldly trials,—from solitude of heart, and, too often, faithless anxiety for the future—to dwell upon the remembrance of that purifying and sanctified sorrow which came direct from the hand of God. I fear, my Mary, I greatly fear that too often now you have a leaden weight upon your heart. I had not been able to realize, in my own mind, the full extent of your daily trials, until I saw these—these people. Your letters gave me no idea of them."

"Nay, dear Lewis, there was little need to inflict more painful thoughts upon you than

you had already. And it would ill become me to dwell upon the peculiarities of those relations to whom I am indebted for a home. Besides, I assure you the appearance is worse than the reality. My Aunt is a good, kind person—most of my relations are so ; though I cannot deny that it is a change—a great change in some respects."

"A change indeed, Mary—for the daughter of Sir Patrick Ruthven! You to be doomed to such society, in an obscure Yorkshire village! Oh ! that you could have remained with my mother."

"Dearest Lewis, you know I could not. You know my motives?"

"I do know them, Mary, and reverence them as the motives of one whose total freedom from selfishness is —"

"Hush, dear Lewis ; how can you talk in that way of the simplest duty ? And then, too, I had no right to reject and fling away my aunt's kindness. Mamma," her voice

faltered, “ mamma made me promise her that I would accept of any overtures of affection from her family. She had been so long and wofully estranged from them, beyond a few letters ; and she earnestly hoped that such might not be my case. I should have felt it an act of disobedience to her whom—whom I never did disobey, and would not now—if I had not met my aunt’s advances half way.”

“ True, dearest, most true ; I can say nothing to such reasoning. You did perfectly right.”

“ Well, then, if you make that admission, Lewis,” said Mary, with a sweet, sad smile, “ I may venture to confess to you what a sacrifice it was to quit your dear mother, and the girls, and live where I do now.”

Again there was a tender pressure of Mary’s arm, and she went on.

“ It is such a new and strange thing to a Scotch person, that English village life ; a

thing to which we possess no equivalent. And I must confess my weakness, my 'Scotch pride,' of which I am sometimes told—small right have I to pride!—and yet I sometimes feel that I cannot quite understand the novelty of my position—the no longer belonging to the county society, as of old."

"Who can wonder, Mary? Believe me, it is a most innocent weakness, if it merit the name. It would be impossible not to feel the difference."

"Of course it strikes one more forcibly in a manufacturing district. No doubt many English villages are very superior in point of tone. But where I am there are people, every one of whom is probably a great deal wealthier than half the landed proprietors with whom I have been accustomed to live; yet belonging to a totally different grade in society, and perfectly satisfied with it—I must do them that justice—with no ambition

to appear greater or finer than they are; and at the same time knowing absolutely no world but that of Yorkshire."

"No," said Græme, "nor desiring to know any other; perfectly satisfied that every thing but what is done in Yorkshire had better be left undone. The compound of shrewdness and ability in many cases, and of benevolence and kindness in many more, with prejudice and absolute ignorance on some points, which exists in that class of English life, is inconceivable to any one who has not had personal experience of it."

"And as to our poor country," continued Mary, a smile struggling with the cloud of sadness on her countenance "I must say that a Scotch tradesman would blush to know as little of the most distant part of Europe, as persons in a greatly superior station here know of Scotland, even down to its geography."

"And of more important points than its

geography; nor is the ignorance confined to your village friends alone," added Græme. "It is not above ten days ago that a clergyman, a dignitary of the church, expressed the utmost astonishment, and almost incredulity to me, on hearing in the course of our conversation, that such a thing as a lawfully-ordained Episcopate existed in Scotland!"

"I can believe it," replied Mary; "for when I happened to say something of our Bishop one day, in talking with one of the best educated and most intelligent persons in my aunt's neighbourhood, she said to me with a puzzled look—'Your Bishop? you call them Bishops, do you, in Scotland? But then they are something Presbyterian, are they not?' She could not take in my explanation—could not in the least understand it. In truth, our poor oppressed Church has met with little sympathy or help from her English sister."

“A better day has dawned,—a better spirit has arisen, Mary,” returned Græme. “Our Oxford sympathies are all awakened for the Scottish Church. I must shew you the beautiful tribute paid to her by one of our best and holiest men, in a recently-published pamphlet. But in the north of England, with a few rare exceptions, it is different as yet.”

“It is all cold, hard, and formal, where I am,” said Mary. “That is the saddest change of all. Dear Mr. Macdonald! how I long for him again! how I long for our own little humble chapel at ——, with its solemn, reverent, and heart-soothing services! And I so often think of Mr. Macdonald, Lewis, in another way. He must be so solitary now! There is no one in that neighbourhood who could fill mamma’s place with him, or even mine.”

“There is no one indeed, Mary. He tells me in his letters that he seems to live more

with the absent and the departed, than with the existing world. At least, he says, his most peaceful hours are spent with them. You hear from him also, do you not?"

"I do, very often—his letters are my greatest comfort, next to yours, Lewis. So kind they are! so fatherly! and he gives me all the minute particulars of those I know—tells me about our own poor people at Blair Ruthven; and all the things that few men think of mentioning in their letters; and which bring the whole scene so vividly before my eyes, that sometimes I seem to start awake from a dream, and ask myself if it can be possible that I am never to see my home any more. But there is the hotel! and I fear we have exceeded the time my aunt mentioned, and that tea will be over."

"It may, for aught I care," said Græme.

"But I care a good deal, Lewis; for she will not be pleased with me; so I shall run

up stairs as fast as I can, and take off my walking things; and do you go to the drawing-room."

Mary did not add, as she might have done, that her cousin Hetta Milsom's ill-concealed malice, small spiteful jealousy, and underbred sneers, were more the objects of dread to her refined and sensitive mind than Mrs. Clarkson's displeasure. She refrained from alluding to this, from her fear of distressing Lewis Græme, seeing how acutely he felt her present position, and his own inability to rescue her from it. But although she did thus refrain, relinquishing the comfort of his sympathy rather than be the means of grieving him, his quick perception was not long in detecting some portion of the truth. He marked the smile, the bridling of the neck, and toss of the head, with which Miss Milsom fixed her eyes on Mary, as she entered and drew near to the tea-table, which still remained in the room, though almost deserted.

“Your tea will be quite cold, Mary,” she said. “But no doubt such a pleasant walk as you’ve been having is worth a cup of cold tea.”

Græme felt his heart beat quick with indignation, as the young lady, by way of lending point to her words, glanced from her cousin to him, with a little significant laugh. But at that moment a new auxiliary came to Mary’s aid, in the shape of an old Scotch lady, of independent fortune, who had been for many years an annual visitor at Gilsland, and had come hither at present, accompanied by a female friend, some days previously. Of a small, spare, and singularly-erect and active figure, this ancient dame was a striking contrast to the English women there, though much farther advanced in age than any of them. While increasing years had expanded their proportions, a precisely contrary effect seemed to have been produced on hers by

the same cause. Her bright, keen, wrinkled countenance, high nose, upright forehead, and clear blue eye, formed a whole which, in spite of the national peculiarities of high cheek bones, still possessed the remains of beauty; and with their expression, so instinct with life, spirit, and energy, presented a type totally different from the round cheeks, small features, and large soft eyes around her. She was near enough the tea-table to hear Miss Milsom's speech; and her quick glance shot in an instant from her to Mary, and to Græme.

“Never heed, my dear,” she said, making room for the blushing girl beside herself, on the sofa where she sat, “drink ye your cauld tea, and be thankfu’ for your warm young heart, and the pleasant simmer time. Ye’l get het tea mony a winter’s nicht, when ye canna’ get a daunder through the bonny woods o’ Gilsland. What say ye, Maister Messer? A’-body kens that young

fock's like Macfarlan's geese, that likeit their play better nor their meat."

"I say there is a time for everything, Mrs. Beatoun," replied the gentleman appealed to, drawing near the sofa, "and youth and summer are too precious to be wasted. My young friends have been better employed than we have, I think."

"What ca' ye that bonny lassie, Maister Messer?" whispered the old lady, in a sufficiently audible aside. "Riven? it's no possible—Sir Peter Riven's dochter. My dear," turning again to Mary, after some further colloquy in a lower tone, "ye'll no mind your grandmother? No, I daursay no; but she was my best freend, and it makes me young again to see her oe. Gie me a look o' your weel-fa'ard face," she added, pushing aside the luxuriant curls which shaded it. "Ye favour her, bairn, ye favour her greatly."

"Rather a stretch of imagination on the

good lady's part," said Mr. Mercer, aside, to Lewis Græme, "if one may trust the testimony of old Lady Ruthven's portrait. But no matter for that."

"Old Lady Ruthven!" repeated Græme, in a wondering tone. "What an age that Mrs. Beatoun must be, if she was a contemporary of hers! Fancy her supposing that Mary could remember a person who has been nearly forty years dead!"

"She is a great age," replied Mr. Mercer, "though I fancy Lady Ruthven might be ten years her senior. But this worthy lady is well on to eighty, if she has not already reached it; yet, as you see, active, vigorous, all alive in mind, and even in body, one of the singular specimens of longevity that are still to be met with in the relics of a former generation; and quite an original, like most old Scottish ladies of that description."

"Was ever the like of these Scotch

people?" observed Miss Hetta Milsom, at the other side of the room, to some of the party around her. "Wherever they go, they pick up cousins and old friends."

"Miss Ruthven has only picked up her grandmother's cousin, if I construe the old lady's singular dialect aright," observed Mr. Hardinge. "You speak Gaelic, of course, Miss Jardine, so that I conclude you understand it."

"Gaelic, Mr. Hardinge, do you not know broad Scotch from Gaelic?" laughed that young lady. "I am sure I may repeat Miss Milsom's words,—'was there ever the like of you English people?'—you think every person in Scotland must speak Gaelic as a matter of course. Why, I don't think I ever heard it spoken but once."

"Well, I don't know," rejoined Miss Milsom, with rather an offended air, for to see her cousin receive attention from any one, was a trial to which her temper was not

equal. "I don't know, I'm sure. My cousin is Scotch, and she speaks Gaelic."

"Yes, but Miss Ruthven comes from Perthshire," retorted Miss Jardine, "and Perthshire and Dumfries-shire are not exactly next door to each other."

"How far are you from Perth?" enquired Mr. Hardinge.

The pair of wood nymphs burst into a laugh, more merry than refined.

"How far are you from Bristol, Mr. Hardinge?"

"When I go home, Mr. Hardinge, I'll send you a map of Scotland as a souvenir."

"Too happy, Miss Jardine, to receive any thing as a souvenir from you."

While this colloquy proceeded, the last relics of tea had disappeared by the ministry of Thomas and his followers, and tables were being cleared for whist. Mrs. Beatoun was an indefatigable whist-player, and she now interrupted an anecdote of Mary's grand-

mother, which she was recounting to her, to summon the companions of her game.

“Major,” addressing a tall, thin, taciturn, elderly gentleman, as ardent a disciple of Hoyle as herself, “ye ’ll take a hand ? Cornal,” looking round for our hero, who was seated by Mrs. Clarkson, “are ye disposed ? No !—aweel, we maun submit to be deprived o’ your company.” Then in a lower tone,—“there was mair tint at Shirramuir, when a ’s done. He’s just played ance since I was here, and he said if was to oblige me, so I behoved to tak’ the will for the deed, for my troth the obligation cost me unco’ dear. Miss Killpaitrick,” continued the old lady, addressing her *dame de compagnie*, “you and me ’ll just cast in our lot thegither.”

Miss Killpaitrick, who disliked whist, and stood somewhat in awe of her patroness’s scolding propensities at that game, nevertheless submitted to her fate with a look of

calm resignation. It was plain that no one dreamt of disputing Mrs. Beatoun's behests. Mr. Mercer was by the same despotic authority assigned as partner to the Major; and the "triste amusement" began in the usual solemn silence.

Lewis Græme was just advancing to take the vacant place on the sofa by Mary's side, when the latter was summoned by her aunt, beside whom the tall, fine-looking elderly man whom she had observed at dinner, was now standing.

"Mary, my dear—Miss Ruthven—this is an old friend of mine, Colonel Musgrave, of Wansted Hall."

"Too happy to be permitted to make Miss Ruthven's acquaintance," said the gentleman, in a low and almost broken voice, taking the hand which Mary extended to him, and pressing it between both his. There was something in his manner—the young girl could not have told what—some-

thing, it might be, which roused in a mysterious way the springs of secret and unconscious sympathy, and whose effect was to bring a gush of tears into her eyes.

But even before he took her hand, Mrs. Clarkson was struck, as she afterwards imparted to her favourite niece Hetta, by the sudden flush which overspread Mary's cheek at her utterance of his name. Be that as it might, it was not long ere Musgrave contrived to draw young Græme and Mary to a distant sofa, the room being now deserted by all the other young people, who had gone up to the dancing apartment above; and here they remained conversing, more in the tone of old friends than of new acquaintances, becoming every instant better pleased with each other, while the evening flew by unheeded.

The room began to grow dusky at length, and candles were placed upon the whist tables; when suddenly the low-toned con-

versation on the sofa behind their backs was interrupted by the uplifted voice of old Mrs. Beatoun.

“ Did ever ye see sic a sumph ?” she exclaimed, in an accent of intense indignation, apostrophising the whole party, and directing their attention to poor Miss Kirkpatrick, who sat in the attitude of a convicted criminal—“ did ever ye see sic a sumph—there where she sits ? She’s been considerin’ for the last half hour whether she wadna trump her partner’s trick !”

“ And done so in the end !” added Mr. Mercer, with an irrepressible smile. “ Well, Miss Kirkpatrick, I must say—”

“ It was very stupid of me indeed !” exclaimed the culprit, in a lamentable tone. “ I’m sure, ma’am, I’m quite ashamed of myself !”

“ Ye may say that, and meikle gude it’ll do me !” retorted her irate patroness. “ Oh ! Marget Killpaitrick ! but ye’re a wake

crater! Afore I would affront mysel' wi' sic like dolted doings, I would tak' a pack o' cards to my ain room, and play at whist wi' three dumbies, till I had maistered the gemm, if I was you. Ye've nae speerit, Marget!"

"I think, Colonel Musgrave," observed Græme, in a low voice, "that you made rather an escape of that whist party!"

"Why, I was warned in time," replied Musgrave, smiling. "I did play one night with Mrs. Beatoun, and very badly I believe; for the fact is, I do not like cards. However, I was well scolded for my mistakes, so I resolved I should not try my luck again. She is a jewel of an old lady—is she not? It is odd how cross-grained the best natured people sometimes become at whist!"

CHAPTER X.

“ Then water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction,
And 'nighted travellers are allured
To their destruction.

An' oft your moss-traversing spunkies,
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is.
The blazing, curst, mischievous monkeys
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.”

Burns.

DURING the course of the ten days following, our hero omitted no opportunity of improving his acquaintance alike with Mary Ruthven and with Lewis Græme; nor did he find the advances he made towards intimacy rejected by either of the young people, in

whom every day he experienced an accession of the warmest interest. His endeavours were ably seconded by Mrs. Beatoun, who had been seized with a prodigious fancy for both, and with a not less inordinate dislike to Mrs. Clarkson and Miss Milsom; and was by no means guarded in her manifestation of the latter sentiment. The keen-sighted old lady had not failed to remark the good understanding between the lovers; and, indeed, had probably been enlightened on the subject by her friend, Mr. Mercer, previous to his departure from Gilsland, which had now taken place. Her national pride, and her reverence for the memory of Mary's grandmother, were also in no slight degree wounded by seeing Sir Patrick Ruthven's daughter dependant on a vulgar-minded woman like Mrs. Clarkson; and exposed to the taunts and sneers, and ill-concealed malice of her under-bred and spiteful niece. From all these combined

feelings, she busied herself in contriving different ways of relieving Mary from the thraldom of their society, at least for a short time; and, assisted by the good-natured and acquiescent Miss Kirkpatrick, was indefatigable in getting up excursions, and making parties to different places in the neighbourhood, the fatigues of which she encountered with the spirit and zest of eighteen, instead of eighty; and from which, whoever else besides the lovers and Colonel Musgrave, might join them, the aunt and niece were pointedly excluded. This mode of conducting matters, it must be confessed, displayed more zeal than discretion; but it was in perfect keeping with the dauntless straightforwardness, and determined will of Mrs. Beatoun. It had the effect, however, of rendering the objects of her dislike her bitter enemies; and of causing poor Mary to purchase some hours of great enjoyment at the heavy price of rude jibes and insolent sneers

in private from her relations;—who, nevertheless, “ did not care, not they, for the old Scotch frump ! they would be very sorry to go if she asked them; only they must say Scotch people knew nothing of good manners. They thanked goodness they were quite independent of her, and had plenty of engagements of their own—they’d have her to know.”

This at least was true ; for although, with the exceptions of Mrs. Beatoun, Musgrave, and “ the Major,” all the party were gone who had been in the house at the time of Mrs. Clarkson’s arrival, their places had been supplied by a new, and even more numerous detachment, amongst whom that lady and her favorite niece found themselves at no loss for congenial society ; and enjoyed themselves, in consequence, to the utmost. Mrs. Clarkson, all this time, neglected no means of rendering herself agreeable to Musgrave, concerning whom certain deep-

laid plans and schemes began to develope themselves in her mind, as she marked his assiduous attentions to Mary. It was a significant fact, coupled with these schemes, that extra-communicative as she was in general disposed to be, no whisper of his early engagement to her own sister, and Mary's mother, ever escaped her, even to Hetta. From the very time of their mutual recognition, she had only mentioned him in general terms as a very old and once intimate friend ; and Mary thus remained in utter ignorance of the secret cause of the interest with which he regarded her ; though no other idea than that of its being the natural and kindly sentiment of what to them appeared old age toward youth, ever occurred to her, or even to Græme. Musgrave, on his part, experienced some emotions of astonishment, blent with disgust, at Mrs. Clarkson's convenient memory with regard to some passages in his past life in

connexion with her family. With her, in especial, as we have already seen, he had from the beginning no associations save unpleasant ones. Still, as his present object was to gain an accurate insight into Mary Ruthven's position, he submitted to the overtures of her aunt, and as much as possible strove to endure, for her niece's sake, the being on familiar terms with her. As to Miss Milsom, her whole heart became absorbed in bitter jealousy of her cousin, as she observed her daily more and more an object of admiration to the male visitors at the Spa; and remarked, as she could not fail to do, the deference paid to her birth and original position in society, by all who knew anything of the matter. That Mary, the "poor Scotch cousin,"—the dependent niece, —should be treated with the consideration due to a baronet's daughter,—not only by "the old Scotch frump," but by several members of the northern English county

families, who were now in the house; and she, the rich Miss Hetta Milsom, one of the principal belles in Leeds, and in the village of Knutsbro', comparatively unnoticed and left out of the question, as belonging to a different class, was to her alike incomprehensible and intolerable. She could at times scarce restrain her temper within the limits prescribed by decency before others; while Mary's heart became heavy in anticipating the additional fund of malevolence and unkindness which her cousin would carry home to vent in private; for without understanding her motives, she did not fail to perceive a very manifest increase in both, upon her part, since their visit to Gilsland; and she had long ere that time been fully made aware that Hetta disliked her. The depressing prospect, to one of her affectionate temper, of returning to such a home as the abode of her aunt and cousin, added not a little to the deep regret with which she

now began to reflect that the period of her intercourse with Græme was drawing to a close, since three days more were all that remained before the time fixed by Mrs. Clarkson for her departure.

Reflections such as these imparted a pensive shade to Mary's aspect on occasion of the last party of pleasure to be presided over by Mrs. Beatoun. That lady's departure was to take place on the following day; and in order, as she expressed it, to "gang aff wi' fleein' colours," she had assembled the whole of her friends and intimates to partake of an *al fresco* dinner at Featherstonhaugh, a fine old place some miles from Gilsland. The day was beautiful, and the whole party in a mood to enjoy it. Several others, besides the foundress of the feast, were also about to depart from Gilsland next day; it seemed very doubtful whether those who, during the past fortnight, had been mingling in all the ease and intimacy of a

watering place, would ever find themselves together again; certainly not all together, anywhere; and there is something mournful in that thought, even in cases where companionship has not advanced to the extent of becoming friendship. A degree of pleasing sadness was thus occasioned ; sufficient, without casting a gloom over the meeting, to excite an unusually warm and kindly tone of feeling in all; and the hours flew by only too swiftly, whilst every member of the party agreed in thinking that if the present were indeed Mrs. Beatoun's last entertainment at Gilsland, it certainly must ever rank in their memories as her brightest.

In the course of the devious wanderings through the grounds which had scattered the company into different groups, Musgrave had found himself for a considerable time alone in the company of Græme and Mary Ruthven. All three now felt thoroughly well acquainted; and, influenced by the

sentiments which we have described above, their conversation on this day assumed a more intimate and confidential character than it had ever before done; and they "talked with open heart and tongue," as they might have done if they had all been of the same age, and companions since childhood.

Thus engaged, the trio were slowly wending their way towards the spot which had been appointed as the rendezvous of the party—a smooth space of greensward, encompassed by fine old trees—where the servants had constructed a temporary table and seats, with sods, planks of wood, and carriage cushions; and where the patroness of the entertainment was seated upon some shawls and plaids, on a mossy bank, entirely unattended, and energetically employed in ordering and directing the movements of the men, and the marshalling of the dishes in due order on the table.

“John, John Thamson!” she was heard to exclaim, as the party approached, apostrophising her own man, an ancient retainer, whose head had grown grey in his mistress’s service, and who was almost as much of an original as herself—“whar’s the muirfool pie, John?”

“Doon at the tither end o’ the table, mem,” responded John, who was in the act of setting down a huge ham.

“That’ll no do ava’, John. Ye maun bring’t up here. I’ll hae it afore Maister Hartley at no rate. I maun be at the helpin’ o’ my ain pie. I’ve had an unco’ fasherie afore I could prevail on Mistress Hudspeth to mak’ it as I tauld her, instead o’ her slaisterin’ English fashion, and I maun see justice done wi’ my pie, and a’ body get share an’ share alike. Fetch it up here.”

“Aweel, mem—that’s sune done,” said John, proceeding to the opposite side of the table, and presently returning with a

mighty pie, which he placed as directed ; “but it’ll tak’ unco’ nippin’ and parin’ to gar that pie gang roun’ them a’.”

“ The mair need to hae it in judicious hands, John. Thae wild hempie laddies kens nocht o’ carving, but just to hack an’ hew, and tear and rive. I maun hae the Major or the Cornal at the helpin’ o’ my pie. And whar’s the roastit chickens, and the veal pasties? and aboon a’, whar’s the pottit char?”

“ They’re a’ here, mem; and I’m thinkin’ they’ll no be the waur o’ promotion up the table, as weel’s the pie?”

“ Certainly, John. I wad wish to hae them a’ in sicht, that I may see what hands they fa’ into. Gie them the round o’ beef at the tither end o’ the table. Let them try their ’prentice hands on it. Ye’re there, Cornal?” added the old lady, interrupting herself as Musgrave and his two companions drew near. “ I’m just sittin’ here makin’ a lament ower the degeneracy of the age!”

“Indeed, Mrs. Beatoun?” said Musgrave, with a smile. “I am sorry to hear it. What has happened to lead you into such a dismal train of thought just now? There is no proof here of degeneracy in the culinary art of the age, at least.”

“Na, troth, Cornal, there wadna need to be. If e'er there was an age o' stechin' an' gormandeezin' an' pampering o' the body, our lot has fa'en on it, I wot. But what say ye to the carvin' o' the age, Cornal? A' body can eat, but let me see ony young body that can carve wiselike. It's a scandal to young fock, the hashin' they mak' when they pit hands till't. There's that laddie Hartley, that's Mr. Vice e'en now, and young Conyers, his neebor, I was fit to fent yesterday to see the tane hackin' at a jigot o' mutton; and the tither hewin' at a back ribs o' veal. In my day, ilka leddy got lessons in carvin'; an' noo the verra young men canna do't. I was just rescuin' my muir-

fool pie frae the hands o' the Philistines,
makin' John set it up near mysel'."

"Is that pie made of your Scotch grouse,
of which you told me the other day, Mrs.
Beatoun?" asked Græme.

"Aye, is it, lad. My bonny muirfool that
com' here a' the gate frae Lammermoor.
They didna' tak that lang journey to be
massacred by Maister Hartley, I trow. Noo,
John," she continued, once more addressing
her servant, "ye'll hae a' the drinkables in
order, and you and the Cornal's man 'ill hae
an e'e till them."

"My word, mem," quoth John, "ae e'e's
no eneuch in kittle times. Me and Anton
Forster 'll hae twa e'en the piece, and gleg
anes; and nae fears o' the drinkables. Will
I send ane o' the lads, mem, to see if the
'taties is readied?"

Permission to that effect being given, one
of the Gilsland post-boys was despatched to
a cottage where the potatoes, which had

been brought with the other provisions, were being cooked; and Mrs. Beatoun's mind being somewhat at rest on the subject of the refection, she proposed to set out in search of the Major and some others of the party, who she knew were close by the house at no great distance; and, having found them, to cause John to sound a horn, which he had brought with him, to recall the others.

"Pray take my arm, Mrs. Beatoun," said Græme, advancing and tendering it.

"Thanks to ye, Maister Græme," replied the old lady, rising and accepting it. Then, as he carefully arranged her shawl for her, "mony thanks," she added, "ye're just practeesin' your gallanterie on me, noo, till keep your hand in."

He laughingly repelled the insinuation, and declared that he never could desire a better object for his "gallanterie," and the old lady, with another laugh of mingled

archness and mirth, repeated it as she glanced behind at Mary, who was following them, her arm in that of Musgrave.

“Aye, aye, my man! Ye wadna like your bonny cousin to see ye oxterin’ a young leddy through the wuds; but it’s a’ richt wi’ an auld wife, and it keeps ye in practice. She’s a bit bonny Burd!” she continued in a tone of earnest feeling; “and blythe wald I be to think ye had her a’ to yoursell in some bieldy nest; for she has a rough blast to bide where she is, and a sair weird to dree. But keep up your heart!” as the young man could not refrain from a deep sigh at these words, “wha kens how sune the bools may row richt, though they’re far ajee the noo? The nicht’s aye at the mirkest near the dawin. Ye maun bring her to see me in George’s Square when she comes wi’ you to Edinburgh, as I doot na but she will ere lang. I wald like ill to loss sicht o’ her for my auld freend’s sake and her ain, and I wald like as ill to loss sicht o’ you.”

“ You are most kind, dear madam,” said Græme. “ I feel truly grateful for your friendly interest.”

“ Nae need o’ gratitude, lad; I like young foock, and I like to bring my freends thegether. Auld foock’s dreigh company to ane anither. I just tire, sittin’ lookin’ at Marget Kill-paitrick.”

“ Miss Ruthven,” said Musgrave, on finding himself alone with Mary, “ I am about to make a request that I fear you will think very strange; but I can only trust to your kindness to give me credit for a reason hereafter to be explained to you. Will you do me a very great favour ?”

“ With the greatest pleasure, Colonel Musgrave,” replied Mary, “ only tell me what it is, and I shall be most happy to do it.”

“ It is,” he answered, “ to give me the pleasure of your company to-morrow, alone, for an hour or two. I have a very particular

communication to make to you, which necessitates our being alone ; and if you will trust yourself to walk out with an old man, you will, I think, soon find cause to be satisfied that I am right in saying so."

He felt her start, felt her heart beat, and saw a sudden rush of colour to her cheeks, which, however, faded away almost immediately, and left her very pale. But her eyes were raised to his countenance, full of the most single-hearted confidence.

" Surely, Colonel Musgrave. I shall be most happy to walk out with you."

" I named to-morrow, Miss Ruthven," pursued he, " not only because our time here, yours as well as mine, is drawing to a close, but because I understood from Mrs. Clarkson last night, that she and Miss Milson intended to make a party to-morrow with Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson, and some other people, to visit Naworth and Lanercost ; and I ventured to hope that you might

manage to excuse yourself from accompanying them, in which case we should be able to secure some undisturbed time in their absence."

"I can easily do so," said Mary. "It was well thought of."

They had no time for more, as Mrs. Beatoun was now coming back in triumph at the head of most of her friends. The sound of the horn soon assembled all the stragglers, and a merry party was presently collected round the woodland board. There, despite the bad carving of Messieurs Hartley and Conyers, the old lady's generalship ably seconded by her prime minister John, and by Colonel Musgrave's servant, Anton Forster, secured for all present an ample share, not only of the grouse pie, but of all the other delicacies with which the table was so amply supplied. The genial hospitality and old fashioned kindliness of their hostess, diffused a corresponding spirit amongst all

the guests, and every one made the utmost exertion to promote the general enjoyment. The banquet over at last, and the edibles removed to some little distance for the behoof of the attendants, an elegant dessert succeeded, accompanied by an ample supply of the "drinkables," over which John and Anton had been enjoined to keep watch and ward; and these latter, Mrs. Beatoun was indefatigable in pressing on the male part of the company.

"Changed days noo, Maister Lovel," she said, addressing an elderly squire who sat near her, "changed days noo. Gentlemen 'll no tak' their wine wise-like now-a-days! Fill your glass, Sir! Major, I canna bide to see thae bottles halting' sae lang, an' naehody the better for them. Cornal, ye hae a toom glass too! I hae as sair wark, sirs, to gar ye drink, as if ye were a wheen blate lasses."

"I am sure, ma'am, we are doing our best to obey you," said Mr. Lovel.

“Bad’s the best, Maister Lovel, if ye ca’ that the best. If ye had seen what I’ve seen, ye wad ken mair aboot it. My worthy father, the Laird of Ba’whillery, wald hae thocht shame to see ony gentleman leave his table sober.”

“But I trust, dear madam,” interposed Musgrave, in a pause of the laughter excited by this instance of olden hospitality, “I trust you will permit our obedience to your orders to stop short of that extreme? I think you will find us more agreeable company if you will indulge us so far.”

“Ilka ane to their taste, Cornal; but in my day we aye thocht the gentlemen danced a’ the better at the Assemblies for a magnum o’ claret aforehand. Miss Nicky Murra’, wha mony a day presided ower the Edinburgh Assemblies, was unco’ particular in all points o’ etiquette; and I ne’er kennt her objeck, sae lang as a gentleman was able to behave himself.”

Once more the company laughed loud and long. "There may be various acceptations of that phrase," said Musgrave. "Miss Nicky Murray's standard of good behaviour was probably, of necessity, a little different from that of the present day; therefore, with all deference to her memory, I venture to recommend adherence to a more modern rule."

"Queer scenes there were sometimes in those days, at their merry-meetings, if all tales be true," observed Mr. Lövel.

"Ye may say that, sir," replied their hostess. "Miss Killpaitrick, ye mind me speakin' o' the Laird o' Drumdrouthie?"

Miss Kirkpatrick intimated assent. "Fill ye your glasses, gentles," quoth Mrs. Beaton, "and I'll tell ye a tale o' the Laird o' Drumdrouthie."

The glasses were replenished accordingly, and the company, in mute attention, awaited the promised tale, which was given accordingly, as follows:—

“ The Laird o’ Drumdrouthie, ye maun ken, sirs, was a neebor o’ my father’s, and mony a blithe nicht they spent thegither. He was a bachelor, no just sae young as he had been, whilk is a melancholy fack wi’ respect to some amang oursells, Major. Aweel, a bachelor he was, as I said; and his house was keepit by twa maiden sisters; wha, as in duty bound, were mickle ta’en up wi’ their brither; and aye when the laird gaed oot till his denner, they laid the maist particular injunctions on his body-servant, Thammas, to tak’ tent o’ his maister coming hame. Ye see it was just a matter that was weel kennt, and perfisly understood, as I tellt ye a while syne, that nae gentleman permittit sic a ’slicht till his hoos, as a guest risin’ frae his table as sober as he sat doon; and the Laird o’ Drumdrouthie had nae objections to abide by that rule. Thammas, he could tak’ his glass wi’ ony man, at a convenient season; but the twa leddies had

gude reason to place confidence in him, for he never had been kennt to get fou' the same nicht as his maister. He aye drove the Laird in a kind o' curricle, an auld-fashioned thing as ye may suppose, wi' an open seat ahint, and anither afore, and ne'er had failed to bring him safely hame.

“ A'weel, it fell out that ae day in the month o' October, the Laird dined at my father's. There was a mune, but she was on the wane; and at the time the merry-meeting brake up, she had na' risen. It was a mirk nicht; but the Laird's gude bay mear kennt the road hame, and sae did Thammas; and when his maister had won into his seat ahint, he drove off at a rattlin' pace. There was a ford to cross, no far frae the avenue gate o' Drumdrouthie, and in the darkness the mear swerved a wee bit frae the gate, gat on the edge o' a rock in the channel o' the water, and maist coupit the curricle. It gae ane unco' heezie, Thammas afterwards

admitted ; but he pu'd up, and gat it richtit just in time ; and so they sprattled through the ford, and very shortly thereafter drew up wi' a great birr at the hoos-door.

“ It was late ; the revel had been keepit up past the usual time ; and nae suner had the sound o' the wheels been heard, than afore even Thammas could win doon frae his high seat, the door flew open, and forth cam the twa leddies, ane o' them carryin' a canngle.

“ ‘ Brither !’ says they in ae breath, ‘ this is an unco’ time o’ nicht !’ — and wi’ that, the ane that held the canngle gaed close up to the carriage, and uttered a dismal cry ! Her sister followed, and echoed it.

“ ‘ Thammas !’ says they — ‘ Thammas ! whar’s the Laird ?’

“ ‘ The Laird ?’ says Thammas wi’ a bewildered look, ‘ whar wad he be, leddies ?’

“ ‘ There’s nae Laird here !’ cries they in desperation. ‘ What hae ye made o’ the Laird, ye fause loon ?’

“‘Me made o’ the Laird?’ says Thammas, in a state o’ total plerpexity. ‘He’s no here sure aenuch! and as I’m a leevin’ man, he was here when we startit,’ says he, examining the carriage. A’ at ance a thocht struck him, ‘I hae’t,’ says he. ‘He’s fa’en into the ford! Od! leddies, I wuss ye wad get a lume that wald haud in!’

“Ye may imagine, sirs, but it’s past my power to describe the commotion that ensued. Man and woman armed theirsels wi’ ropes and lanterns, and flew doon the avenue like mad; the leddies and Thammas leadin’ the van. By this time the mune had risen; and just as they arrived at the ford she struggled wi’ a wan ray through aneath a dark clud, and disclosed the objeck o’ their search. The laird was lyin’ on the bank, wi’ his heed close to the water, and belike it was runnin’ intill his mouth, for ever and anon he waved his twa hands, as if he was courteously puttin’ something frae him that

was ower keenly pressed; and says he, as Thammas lootet doon to lift him—‘ I’m for nae mair! I’m for nae mair!—neither het nor cauld!’

“ Aweel, they raised him till his feet, and ascertained that nae bone was broken; and as he cam’ to some dim perception o’ whar he was, ‘ Thammas,’ says he, ‘ I’ve tint my wig.’ And sae he had in troth, baith hat and wig. After some search the wig was found stickin’ in a bourtree buss that overhang the water. The hat was past redemption. Thammas wrang the water frae the wig, and handed it till his maister, wha pat it on his head, wi’ the hinner side foremost; and ‘ Thammas,’ says he, ‘ this is no my wig.’ Says Thammas, ‘ there’s nae wale o’ wigs here. Your honour maun just tak’ what ye can get.’ And sae they fetcht the Laird hame.”

Loud, long, and nearly unextinguishable was the laughter that followed this legend, even on the part of those amongst the

English listeners, to whom the old lady's Doric was all but an unknown tongue. So irresistible was the quaint humour with which it was narrated, a humour which, broad though it were, in no way partook of any shade of coarseness.

“I presume, dear madam,” said Musgrave, as soon as he could speak, “the moral of this story is, that the Laird became an improved character, after such a nocturnal adventure?”

“Ye're oot there, Cornal, for as gleg's ye think yersel,” replied his hostess. “The moral is, that the twa leddies e'en took Thammas's advice to heart, and gae their brither nae rest till he bocht a close chaise in place o' the auld curricle ; and thereafter their minds was easy, let him bide oot as late as he likit, since he had gotten ‘a lume that wald haud in.’ ”

Finding that the example of the redoubted Laird of Drumdrouthie, did not seem at all

likely to be followed by any of her guests on the present occasion, and that the day was wearing on, and the hour of departure drawing very near, Mrs. Beatoun now commanded a bumper all round to the next merry-meeting of the party about to break up; and addressed herself to a young Scotchman amongst them, whose fine voice and taste in singing his native melodies, had frequently delighted the visitors at Gilsland, since he came there.

“Come, Maister Cockburn, gie us a sang afore we part. Gie us ‘Auld Lang Syne,’ and we’ll a’ join the chorus, wi’ crossed hands, in the gude auld Scots’ fashion. Rise up to your feet, sirs.”

Every one obeyed, as every one always did obey the peremptory old lady, under whose directions the whole party was speedily linked hand to hand, ready to strike into the chorus of a song which ever finds a responsive echo in every Scottish

heart; and not in Scottish hearts alone, for who has not an "Auld Lang Syne?"

In what human breast is there not some Past enshrined, some memory of other days—hallowed, it may be, by departed sorrow, even more deeply than by departed joy—hallowed—by the associations of vanished household gladness, by the Cross and by the Grave?

As the clear, full, mellow voice of the singer arose on the still evening air, his sweet and distinct articulation giving full effect to the sweet words of Burns, in the first verse, and then, in the refrain, the blended voices of the assembled company joining his, sent forth in full chorus the heart-stirring—"For Auld Lang Syne, my dear, for Auld Lang Syne,"—the sounds were in no slight degree thrilling, even overcoming, to some amongst them, and deeply touching to all, striking as they did upon the chord of feeling already aroused in the

prospect of the speedy dispersion of so pleasant a circle. Two of the party found it impossible to join in the chorus. The heart of Mary Ruthven swelled to her throat at the very first words, and a gush of tears filled her eyes ; whilst Musgrave, who, standing next her, had one of her hands clasped in his, was equally compelled to silence, though evincing no other outward token of emotion than by a fervent pressure of the hand he held.

The merry meeting was over, the carriages marshalled for departure, and at last the guests were gone. They whirled rapidly away, through the tranquil summer's evening ; their hearts, with scarce an exception, filled with that cast of pleasing and pensive thought, that sweet sadness, which is at times more sweet—at all times more attractive—than mirth ; and left the glades of the old park, the scene of their late enjoyment, to the undisturbed dominion of silence—to the flitting bats, and to the softly falling dew.

CHAPTER XI.

" But an' you will not wed, I'll pardon you:
Graze where you will, you shall not house with me ;
Look to't, think on't ; I do not use to jest.
Thursday is near : lay hand on heart, advise :
An' you be mine, I'll give you to my friend ;
An' you be not, hang, beg, starve, die i' the streets ;
For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.
Trust to't, bethink you, I'll not be forsworn."

Romeo and Juliet.

TEA had been prepared for the party on their return from Featherstonhaugh ; and on entering the drawing-room in order to partake of it, they found the remaining inmates of the hotel lounging there as usual. It was later than the regular tea hour; an infringement on the generally inexorable laws of the house, which had been conceded

as a favor to the all-powerful influence of Mrs. Beatoun; and it was voted too late to begin dancing; besides which, most of the young people were fatigued. The whist-table, however, was set out as usual; for Mrs. Beatoun declared that she must have a last rubber with the Major; so, whilst that was in progress, the rest of the company dispersed themselves about the large room, talking, working, or indulging in the *dolce far niente* feeling induced by a pleasant degree of weariness,

“ You have had a charming day for your excursion, Mr. Gra-ham,” said Miss Hetta Milsom, in a tone of unusual amenity. She came up to him as she spoke, where he was standing in the window at the end of the room. Mary Ruthven and several other young people had been collected there, but a summons from Mrs. Clarkson, who was talking to Musgrave on a distant sofa, had just called away the former, and the others

were in the act of surrounding the piano-forte, where Mr. Cockburn was about to sing a duet with a young lady. Under cover of the music, to which Græme would infinitely have preferred listening, Miss Milsom entered into a conversation on the weather, the country, the park of Featherstonhaugh, &c., &c., till at last Græme was suddenly aroused from the dreamy mood in which he was rather hearing than attending to what Sir Hugh Evans might have termed the "pribbles and prabbles" of his self-elected companion, by a speech which in an instant seemed to send all his blood rushing in an impetuous current to his head.

"Colonel Musgrave seems to have enjoyed himself to-day as much as any of you. It is quite wonderful how much younger and handsomer he looks since he came here! I fancy," with a little malicious laugh, "he may thank my cousin Mary for renewing his youth. Love is a great beautifier, they say."

She fixed her large, cold, sharp grey eyes full on Græme as she said this; and marked, with an internal satisfaction, the instantaneous effect of her words;—the palpable start, the flush which overspread his face, then suddenly faded to a deadly paleness; the hurried glance towards Mrs. Clarkson's sofa,—and without leaving him time to collect his thoughts, she went on with another little laugh.

“ If I weren’t afraid of offending you, Mr. Gra-ham, I should say something else of love —something about his being blind—though not quite in the usual sense. You don’t mean to say that you’ve never obseived what a rival you had in the *bold* Colonel?”

“ Miss Milsom,” interrupted Græme, who had now in some measure recovered his speech, “ pardon me, but I must request you to oblige me by choosing another subject for your jests than your cousin and mine, Miss Ruthven. You must, I am sure, be

aware that it is not quite in good taste to — ”

“Good taste? Mr. Gra-ham. Jests?—You don’t think I am joking, do you? I can tell you there’s not another person but yonself who hasn’t remarked it.”

“Remarked what, Miss Milsom?” inquired the young man in a cold and stately tone.

“Remarked Colonel Musgrave’s attentions to Mary, if you will have it, Mr. Gra-ham: and, what’s more, remarked her flattering reception of them. There’s ’alf-a-dozen people have spoken to aunt, this very day, about it, and *hasked* when ’twas to be.”

“Really, Miss Milsom,” said Græme,— this—to me, is—to say the least of it — ”

“To you! and why not to you? I’m sure,” and again she laughed; “I’m sure, if you’ve the very particular interest in the matter that I always understood you ’ad, you are the very person to be put up to what the *bold* gentleman is after. ’Tis none of my fancying; don’t suppose it. ’Tis the

common talk of the 'otel ; and I must say Mary gives them no reason to think she dislikes the report being spread. She seems mighty well pleased to have the old Nabob dangling after her."

"Miss Milsom," reiterated Græme, who was trembling at once with indignation, and with a mixture of other painful emotions, "once more I must request you to be silent. I must entreat you to refrain from farther attacks upon Miss Ruthven, unkind and unfeeling in themselves, and singularly misplaced in being addressed to me. I cannot and will not permit her to be thus mentioned in my presence. I am sorry that you have compelled me to speak to you in this way, but —"

"As you please, Mr. Gra-ham," interrupted his tormentor, colouring deeply with anger, for her temper, at no time easily restrained, began to kindle at his words and manner,—"just as you please.

I fancied I was doing you a kindness, but since this is your way of receiving it, I've no more to say, I leave you to the assistance of your own *heyes* and *hears*, and I advise you to make use of them. As to 'unkind and unfeeling,'—with many thanks for your good advice, I don't require any one to teach me my dooty to my cousin. Pr'aps if you were to give her a little 'int of hers to me and aunt, it mightn't be so far out of the way. Miss Mary is certainly fortunate in her champions," she added, nearly out of breath with the rapidity of her speech, and becoming every instant more excited, as she found that she was likely to have all the talk to herself, "very fortunate! only 'tis a pity they take *hoppo-* *sides*; for I heard another gentleman, a few minutes ago, talking of this very business, and he said he couldn't think so *hill* of Miss Ruthven as to suppose she did not mean to marry the Colonel, after all the

encouragement she had given him. Now then!—I'm sorry *you've* compelled *me* to tell you this, but you'd better take care how you provoke me, else I'll tell you a little more."

And with this gratuitous assertion, invented, it need hardly be added, with daring ingenuity, on the spur of the moment, Miss Milsom walked off, leaving Græme transfixed, and, for the moment, incapable of reply, had she awaited any. Mechanically, he looked round as she departed, and beheld Mary still seated on the sofa, which Mrs. Clarkson had now vacated, conversing with Musgrave, the faces of both expressive of deep interest in their subject, whatever it might be.

The young man's impulse was to steal quietly from the room, and escape into the open air; there to arrange and disentangle the confused mass of ideas crowding upon him, and reflect with calmness on the new

and astounding revelation which had just been made. But as he was moving from the window for that purpose, he was arrested by Mrs. Clarkson herself, who, addressing him at first, as her niece had done, on the weather, or some such subject, seated herself in an arm-chair by the window, and presently entered upon a more lengthened discussion, with which we shall not at present trouble the reader.

In an hour after, and just before supper time in the hotel, at which meal the visitors who chose to partake of it, were wont to assemble in the dining-room, Græme, who was crossing the hall towards the stair-case, was met by the last man whom he at that moment wished to encounter, Musgrave himself, on his way from own sitting-room, whence he was carrying a book in his hand, which he apparently had gone to fetch.

“Mr. Græme!” said he, as they came close to each other, and he observed that the

latter carried a bed-candlestick, "is it so late? Is supper over? I have been engaged in my room in searching for a book which I promised to lend Miss Ruthven, and had mislaid,—but I had no idea that I had been so long absent."

"No, I do not think it is supper-time yet," replied Græme, "but I have been out of doors for the last half hour, and did not return to the drawing-room before going up stairs."

"But—going up stairs? You do not mean that you are retiring for the night already, Mr. Græme."

"I am," said Græme. "I am not very well, so I should be dull company down stairs; and I thought it best to retire."

"I am very sorry to hear it," answered Musgrave, in a tone of so much real interest and simple kindness, that it went direct, in spite of all the late insinuations, to the young man's heart. "What is the matter?"

You do look very ill," he added, gazing earnestly at him. "Do you feel faint? Take my arm. Let me go up stairs with you."

"Not upon any account, Colonel Musgrave," said Græme. "You are very kind, but there is no occasion to trouble yourself."

"Trouble, my dear Mr. Græme? what do you mean by talking of trouble? Now do let me come with you; let me prescribe for you. I fear you are over-fatigued, for, pardon me, I think you do not look strong."

"Thank you, I very seldom ail anything," said Græme, "and it is nothing—nothing but fatigue, I daresay. I shall be quite well after a night's rest. I require nothing more, I assure you."

"I hope it is so," answered Musgrave, "and if you will not accept of my company, I shall not keep you standing here. Only," he added, turning, just as he was moving away, "did you see Miss Ruthven, Mr.

Græme? Just as I left the room, she went to look for you—saying that she had something particular to say to you."

"I did not," replied Græme, becoming if possible, more pale than before. "Pray tell her, Colonel Musgrave, that I cannot—I do not feel able to return to the drawing-room."

"You do not look so, indeed," said Musgrave, whose eyes were fixed upon the young man with an anxious expression. "But she will be sadly distressed to hear that you are ill."

"I am not ill,—it is a mere trifle; I shall be quite well to-morrow," replied Græme, "and then ——"

"Yes, to-morrow will, I trust, set all to rights," said Musgrave emphatically. "Good night, my dear Mr. Græme."

He proceeded to the drawing-room, the door of which he reached just as supper was announced, and offered his arm to Mary when the party began to move.

“Do you mean to go in to supper, Miss Ruthven,” asked he.

“Yes,” said Mary, smiling. “Mrs. Beatoun insists that we shall all go in to supper, as she intends to bid us all farewell to-night. She breakfasts very early to-morrow, and sets off at seven o’clock for Scotland.”

“Dear old lady! I am quite grieved to part with her,” exclaimed Musgrave.

“And I not less so,” answered Mary. “She is so kind, so clever and original! And how many happy hours we owe her! What a charming day this has been!”

“It has indeed,” said Musgrave, “been a charming and a very exciting day. I fear your cousin, Mr. Græme, has found the excitement, or fatigue, rather too much for him. He is not quite well, I am sorry to say—but nothing —”

“Lewis!” interrupted Mary, becoming in her turn deadly pale. “What is the

matter, Colonel Musgrave? Oh! pray tell me!"

"My dear Miss Ruthven! nothing of the least consequence, I assure you." He looked up and caught Hetta Milsom's malicious eye and smile, as she sat down on his other side at the supper table, which they had now reached. "Mr. Græme has retired to his room a little indisposed, as he begged me to tell you when I met him just now. He is rather over-fatigued, I fancy, that is all."

"I thought Mr. Gra-ham was *ill*," interposed Hetta; "he looked so pale! as if he were ready to faint, when aunt was talking to him in the windor, and went out of the room so suddenly; but you were too well engaged to observe it, Mary!"

Mary looked up at her cousin, her self-possession restored by this speech, with a calm enquiring glance. So did Musgrave, whose eyes were fixed on the speaker for about a couple of minutes, as if some thought had occurred to him.

“I told Mr. Græme,” he then said, pointedly turning to Mary, “how very anxious you were to speak to him to-night; but I saw he was not equal to returning to the drawing-room. To-morrow will set all to rights.” This was added in the same emphatic tone which he had used in saying the same words to Græme. “He is not strong, I think, as I took the liberty of telling him—and must take care of himself.”

“No, he is not strong,” answered Mary, sadly; “and he works so hard when he is at home. Lewis never had a thought of himself, and it is impossible to persuade him that he overdoes, very often.”

“He wad be meikle the better o’ a wife, my dear, to gar him tak’ tent,” said Mrs. Beatoun, whose quick ears had caught the subject of conversation. “I’m greatly vexed to hear o’ him bein’ ill, and to think that I’ll no see him again. Ye maun tell him frae me, my dear, no to forget what

him and me spak' o' the day ; and maybe he'll tell ye what I said till him !” This enigmatical message was eked out by sundry smiles and significant glances. “ Noo' in gude time, here comes the Plottie !” continued the old lady, interrupting her discourse on the entrance of Thomas with a mighty jug of mulled wine—Scoticé—*plottie*, which she had ordered as a stirrup cup before her departure. It was placed on the table before her, flanked by an array of large glasses, which were presently filled, and a peremptory order issued that all present should partake thereof, and wish her and Miss Kirkpatrick a good journey.

Many and cordial were the good wishes uttered on the occasion, and sincere the regret with which every one who had enjoyed an intimacy with her, bade farewell to the kind-hearted and original old lady. Her own adieux to all were warm and kindly; but most so of all to “ the Cornal and the

Major," on both of whom she earnestly pressed the hospitality of her house in George-square, Edinburgh, and urged upon them the propriety of a speedy visit to Scotland. The taciturn Major enunciated a few sentences to the effect that should he ever make such a distant journey, it would be for the purpose of visiting Mrs. Beatoun. Musgrave smiled, and shook his head.

"I have been so long a wanderer, my dear madam, that now I have returned to my parent nest, I feel as if I should never stir from it more. Certainly if anything could tempt me to do so, it would be the pleasure of renewing so delightful an acquaintance; but I am getting old, and—"

"Auld, Cornal? Hoot fie! I wonder ye dinna think shame to speak sic a word to me, that might be your mither; and I wad like to see the youngest amang ye as active. Gae wa'! I rede ye be in Scotland afore anither twalmonths gae ower your.

head ; and I ken the errand will bring ye there. Come here, Miss Riven, my dear."

She drew Mary close to her, and said a few words in a low voice, which caused her to blush vividly, and shake her head with a deprecatory air. Musgrave smiled, took her hand and Mrs. Beatoun's, and fervently pressed them together between both his. The old lady then kissed Mary affectionately ; and her example being followed by the quiet Miss Kirkpatrick, who was a thoroughly amiable and good hearted soul, the pair retired for the night. Most of the ladies in the party had already done so ; and no one was in the room when this little scene took place, save the Major, Mrs. Clarkson, and Miss Milsom, whose keen, malicious eyes had taken in its smallest detail, from the opposite side of the apartment.

" Well, Mary," she said, as the aunt and nieces were ascending the stairs to their bed-rooms, " I s'pose the old Scotchwoman was

hasking you the same question so many people 'ave hasked aunt lately—when it's to be?"

Mary, whose eyes were full of tears—for she had become quite attached to Mrs. Beatoun; and had besides said too many farewells in her short life ever to be able to utter the word without feeling a thousand mournful memories swelling up in her heart—hastily passed her fingers over her wet eyelashes, and looked up, as if not quite understanding the drift of her cousin's speech.

“What did you say, Hetta?” enquired she.

“Come into my room a minute, Mary, will you?” said Mrs. Clarkson, opening the door of her own apartment. Mary followed mechanically, for she was just then thinking how much she wished it were possible to hear of Lewis Græme that night; and Hetta, who was last, repeated her question as she closed the door.

"I suppose my aunt told every body who asked," replied Mary simply, "that it could not be till Lewis had a living."

Her cousin burst into a loud insulting laugh.

"Lewis!—a living! Come, come, Mary. That won't do. You don't think aunt and me quite so green as that?"

"I do not understand you, Hetta," said Mary in a quiet tone. "What do you mean?"

"Why, you don't s'pose I'm speaking of Mr. Gra-ham, do you? You don't imagine 'tis him that they are all talking about you with?" asked Hetta, in a shrill triumphant tone.

"I did not know any one was talking of me," returned Mary, calmly, though her heart was throbbing, "as I have never given any one occasion to do so. I ——"

"Oh! haven't you though?" sneeringly interrupted her cousin.

Mary's spirit was naturally a high one; but early trial, with the necessity imposed upon her of acting for herself, had, under the ~~blessed~~ influences of religion, taught her to subdue it into quiet firmness and composure. It was, however, a spirit which rose under injustice or insolence; and as she now fixed her eyes full upon the little vixen before her, there was something in their expression which caused Hetta to turn hers away.

"Whatever you have to say of me, Hetta, or you, my dear aunt," she added, turning to Mrs. Clarkson, who sat, large and consequential, but breathing rather more quickly than usual, in an arm-chair, "I shall be exceedingly obliged to you if you will say at once. I see there is something you want me to understand; and I assure you I do not understand it. What is it?"

"You'd have us think you very innocent, Mary, but it won't do;" exclaimed Hetta,

unable longer to control the torrent of spite which had for some time been labouring to find a vent. "You'd have us fancy you don't know that every body here is wondering when you are to be married to that hold Nabob?"

Mary became pale as death ; nor could the least observant spectator have failed to detect in her fixed countenance and distended eyes the unmistakeable expression of horror and amazement. "Married!" she at last articulated ; "Married—to *whom* did you say?"

"To Colonel Musgrave, my dear," interposed Mrs. Clarkson ; "and very natural. Every body sees that he is quite devoted to you ; and you receive all his attentions in the most flattering manner, and ——"

"Married!" again ejaculated Mary. "I —married to Colonel Musgrave! Monstrous! Who dared to say such a thing?"

"Dared! I like that!" almost screamed

Hetta. "Dared, indeed! When an elderly gentleman is always following a young lady like her shadow, and she walking, and talking, and romancing with him, and all that, in a public place like this!—are people not to say what they think, forsooth?"

"But you, aunt Clarkson," said Mary, calmly turning away from Hetta, "you, who are aware of my engagement, to whom I told it many months ago—you, of course, contradicted the preposterous report, if any one was silly or—or *malicious* enough to place such a construction on the fatherly kindness of an elderly man to a young girl like me? You, of course, explained my situation, and told any one who was so impertinent as to mention such a thing——"

"Why really, as to that, my dear," interrupted Mrs. Clarkson, "I don't very well see what you would have me say. Every one knows what engagements are, when there's no hope whatever, and a girl has

nothing, and is dependent on relations who had enough to do with their money already. As I said to your cousin, Mr. Gra-ham, to-night,—‘in a case like my niece’s, —’”

“ My cousin, Mr. Græme ! ”—you, you spoke of this to my cousin ? ” faltered Mary, her white, quivering lips scarcely able to articulate the words.

“ Indeed I did, my dear, and who so proper to do it to ? ”

“ And I can tell you,” triumphantly added Hetta, “ it was not the first time he’d heard of it.”

Mary could not answer. She leant against a chest of drawers by which she was standing, and covered her face with her hands. Here was a clue to Græme’s disappearance from the room, and to his indisposition, whether actual, or merely alleged as a pretext for escape ! Her brain whirled round, she could not arrange her thoughts, nor had she time allowed her to do so, for whilst her

face was still turned from them, Mrs. Clarkson gave Hetta a private sign to leave them together. She could not depend on her niece's temper, and felt that she should manage what she had to say better alone. That young lady accordingly advanced to bid her cousin good night. Mary returned the wish, scarce knowing what she said, then was about to take her own candle, and follow her cousin, when she was called back by her aunt.

“No, my dear, I can't part with you yet. You've been so much engaged with your new friends lately” (here Hetta had time for a final toss of the head, in the act of closing the door) “that I've never had leisure for a word with you, and I've something very particular to say. Sit down in that chair.”

Poor Mary obeyed in silence, glad to rest her trembling limbs, and awaited what Mrs. Clarkson had to say. We spare the reader

a detailed account of this outpouring of a vulgar and indelicate mind. Suffice it to tell, that Mary found it established as a settled matter, between her aunt and her favourite gossips in the hotel, that the attentions paid to herself by Colonel Musgrave were "very particular," that there was "no mistaking what they meant," and, moreover, that she had from the very first, met and encouraged them. Here it may be mentioned that Mrs. Clarkson having from an early period of her renewed acquaintance with our hero, set her heart on providing, through his instrumentality, for her dependent niece, had herself been at pains to point out and magnify all these circumstances to her friends and intimates; so that in fact any gossip which had taken place on the subject, originated with herself. But for her assistance, it was an idea unlikely to have struck any one, as Musgrave's manner to Mary was infinitely more that of a

father than a lover; and her engagement to her cousin must have been very evident to any one who saw them together. All this, however, it was impossible for Mary to know, and she sat aghast, confounded and shocked beyond expression to learn that such a construction could have been put upon her conduct. It was in vain for her, when she found voice to speak, to assure her aunt that from many things which Colonel Musgrave had said to her, she was satisfied that he was perfectly aware of the engagement between herself and Græme; and that his manner to her was that of a kind and protecting friend, an old friend of her family, and nothing more. Mrs. Clarkson smiled a smile of calm superiority. She knew the world a little better than Mary; it was no use talking to her; Colonel Musgrave had said things to herself which could only be interpreted in one way; Mary would see whether or not she was right. Her name

was not Bessy if her niece did not receive a proposal from him before she left Gilsland.

“ If so,” her niece replied, “ if indeed any thing so preposterous were within the bounds of possibility — ”

What, Mrs. Clarkson would be glad to know, did Mary mean by preposterous ? Walter Musgrave was a good many years younger than she herself was—she knew his age to a day ;—and still a very handsome man. And his fine property, and girls that had nothing, &c., &c., &c.

To this Mary replied with an assumed calmness, painfully at variance with the throbbing at her heart, and the hysterical catch in her throat, which at times threatened to choke her as she spoke. She reminded her aunt that all this signified nothing to her ; that should an event so utterly unlikely indeed take place, there could be but one reply to such a proposal, as to any other proposal ;—she was engaged to her cousin.

That was all very fine, Mrs. Clarkson rejoined, but what was the world to say of her conduct? what was Colonel Musgrave to say to it? She would be called a jilt, neither more nor less, after giving him the encouragement she had done. And what would Mr. Gra-ham himself say? She, Mrs. Clarkson, could see that he was a young man of most fastidious feelings. She had talked to him very plainly to-night;—she seized the opportunity, feeling it her dooty. She had spoken of Colonel Musgrave's attentions to her niece, of the manner in which they were talked of in the hotel, of the establishment it would have been for Mary, but for their,—she must be so plain as to call it,—very hopeless engagement. And, indeed, she had told him that Colonel Musgrave would have good reason to consider himself an ill-used man, when he did propose, if Mary meant to keep it.

Mary clasped her hands in agony, which she could no longer restrain.

“Oh! my dear aunt!” she exclaimed, “what have you done? You said all this to Lewis? And he—what did he answer?”

“No matter,” was the succinct reply. “I had a great deal more to have said to him, but two or three people came up just then, and he got up and went away. I shall find another opportunity, no doubt, both for him and you. Now it is very late, Mary, and I advise you to go to bed. Think over what I have told you; it is all for your good; and I felt it a duty. No —” interrupting something which her niece seemed about to say to her—“‘tis no good talking any more to night; and I’m half dead with weariness. Just ring my bell for Jenkins, please; I dare say she thinks I’ve gone to bed in my clothes. Thank you. Good night, my dear.”

Mary had not shed a tear in her aunt’s apartment; she had restrained the impulse by the strongest effort; but now she was alone in her own. She locked the door, set

down her candle, and sinking on her knees by the bed, hid her face in the counterpane, and wept and sobbed as if her heart would burst. Wounded feeling, insulted delicacy, agonizing apprehension for the effects of such coarse and revolting interference on the mind of her lover, and a bitter sense of the dependence of which she had been so tauntingly reminded, all lent their aid to swell the torrent ; whose flow did, however, serve to relieve some part of the dull dead weight of misery which the late conversation had left upon her heart. Nor was it very long ere a higher and holier relief was afforded to the orphan girl, as in her loneliness and anguish she uplifted her heart to the Father of the fatherless ; Cast her burden at the foot of the Cross ; and there implored the aid and direction which no suppliant has ever asked in vain. It was very late ere she retired to bed ; but late though it was, and fatigued though she had been by the day's excursion, not to mention the strangely-

different night which had succeeded so happy a day, she found it impossible to sleep, beyond now and then a brief and unrefreshing doze; from which she would start awake in a few minutes, under some vaguely painful impression of impending woe and misery, which gradually deepened into consciousness scarce, if at all, less painful.

At last the early summer dawn began to break on Mary's sleepless eyes. Is there any one amongst the many in this sorrowful world, whose lot it has been to behold the morning rise upon a "night of weeping," or of watching, and who has not felt at such a time the strange, mysterious, unutterable mournfulness of the first hour of dawn? Is there any one who does not know the dreary sinking of the heart under the influence of that dim grey hour;—the depths beneath depths of despondency and sadness into which the spirit seems to plunge pressed down by its weight of cold leaden

stillness? So it was with her, as she lay watching the first approach of light from her window, the curtain of which had not been drawn. There was something so lifeless, so spectral, in the outlines of the motionless trees, something so silent and dead in the aspect of sleeping nature under the dead colourless sky, that every sad thought which had been with her through the night seemed to sit with a more oppressive burden on her heart, in sympathy with the outer world's dreariness and desolation. She did not weep;—she felt as if she had no more tears to shed; but lay in a species of waking trance, haunted by mournful visions. Thus sleep at last surprised her. She awoke after a sound sleep, in an altered world.

“ The sun was in the skies,
And the dappled east was blushing.”

Light, and glory, and loveliness, were abroad with the sweet matin prime. A flood of golden radiance was streaming through the

trees, lately so still and spectral ; their bright green leaves were glowing with the early dew ; and every branch, every spray, was alive with rejoicing birds, pouring forth their glad chorus of welcome to the day. The saddest heart must have owned the influence of such a reviving hour ; and it was not long ere Mary, having opened her window to admit the delicious morning air, was dressing herself, in a calmer and more hopeful frame than a couple of hours before she could have imagined possible. Nerved by her long and earnest devotions to meet the crosses and trials of the day, she then prepared to leave the house for a time, as it was still very early, and go out to walk. The establishment was all on foot, and in a bustle, preparing for the departure of Mrs. Beatoun, ; but Mary did not encounter any one as she issued out at the door, and pursued her solitary way by one of the field-paths which led towards the river.

END OF VOL. I.





